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14

AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL VIEW  
OF THE  
SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF EUROPE  
IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

*John Daniel* BY  
J. D. MORELL, A.M.

VOLUME I.



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Ed.

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TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,  
IN WHICH HIS EARLY ATTACHMENT TO PHILOSOPHY  
WAS AT ONCE STIMULATED AND DIRECTED,  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES  
ARE GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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## PREFACE.

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THE author, in sending forth the present work to the public, wishes at the outset to bespeak the candour and indulgence of the reader. The subject, he is well aware, is at present of a very unpopular character; besides which, the abstruseness of many of the details renders it vain to hope that he has succeeded in discussing them without falling into some errors and many imperfections. The work itself is not the production of an experienced writer; it contains the first thoughts which the author has yet ventured to intrude upon public notice, and was composed in the quietude of a country life, without the aid of any mind to suggest improvements. Under these circumstances he feels that, while he is bound to speak with much modesty of his own labours, he can at the same time lay some reasonable claim to kind consideration from the critical reader.



With regard to originality, the author makes very little pretension to anything of the kind. He has used very freely the opinions and the arguments of other people; seldom rejecting an apposite idea because it was to be found amongst the productions of some other mind. Should he only succeed in bringing *great truths and principles* before the attention of his fellow-men, he will not envy any one the first origination of them. If it may be now allowed him to lay down the stiffness of the third person, and assume the confidential ease of the first, he will detail as briefly as possible the train of circumstances, which has led to the present attempt, and the purpose he has had in view in making it.

Whilst going through a systematic course of general study in London, I was induced, from a somewhat undefined idea of the importance of the subject, to take up Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding." The perusal of that immortal work seemed to open a region of surpassing grandeur; but at the same time gave few results, upon which it was possible to rest with calmness and satisfaction. I next betook myself to the Lectures of Dr. Thomas Brown, hoping to find there the

satisfaction I required. In this hope I was not *for the time* disappointed. The style was so captivating, the views so comprehensive, the arguments so acute, the whole thing so complete, that I was almost insensibly borne along upon the stream of his reasoning and his eloquence. Naturally enough I became a zealous disciple; I accepted his mental analysis as almost perfect; I defended his doctrine of causation; with him I stood in astonishment at the alleged obtuseness of Reid; and, with the exception of his ethical system, was ready to consider "ipse dixit" as a valid argument for the truth of any metaphysical dogma. Induced by the lively admiration I had conceived for the Scottish metaphysics, I proceeded to the University of Glasgow, and studied philosophy in the class-rooms, which had been honoured by the presence and enlightened by the genius of Reid and Smith. Here the veneration for Brown began to subside; I felt that there was a depth in the philosophy of Reid which I had not fully appreciated, and that the sensational tendency of the former, though it added popularity to his thoughts, was an ill exchange from the incipient spiritualism of the latter. Hoping to probe the questions relating to the foundation of

human knowledge more to their centre, I attempted to read Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," and some few other Continental works; but they for the most part opened a region so entirely new, that I felt quite unable to compare their results *as a whole* with those of the Scottish metaphysicians. Desirous, however, of pursuing the subject still further, I repaired to Germany; I heard Brandis and Fichte expound German philosophy in their lecture rooms, and spent some months in reading the standard works of the great masters. The different systems, which were here contending for the preference, gradually became intelligible; but, alas! they stood alone—in complete isolation;—to compare their method, their procedure, their aim, their results satisfactorily with those of our English and Scottish philosophy, appeared, as yet, almost impossible. To gain light, therefore, upon these points, I turned my attention to France; the name of eclecticism seemed too inviting to be turned away, as it often is, on the charge of syncretism or want of profundity; and my hopes were not altogether deceptive. I found, or thought that I found, in the writings of Cousin, and others of the modern eclectics, the germs of certain great

principles, upon which a comparison of all the philosophical systems of the present age could be advantageously instituted, and saw, that such a comparison would be of very important service to one, who should be anxious to travel, as I had done, over the broad field of European metaphysics. How eagerly should I have welcomed such a directory myself, while I was toiling to get some clear light upon the conflicting systems of Germany; how highly should I have valued a simple and definite statement of the foundation principle of the different schools—how intensely rejoiced in a work which would shew the relations of the one to the other. It was with a view, therefore, of supplying the want which I had myself felt, that I began the sketch which has now swelled into these two volumes; and it is in the hope that it may afford to others what I myself vainly sought for, that it is now ushered with all its imperfections before the public.

The plan of the work, as a whole, may be stated in very few words. First, I have attempted to explain and illustrate the general idea of philosophy, and to deduce the fundamental notions from which it springs. Having grasped the idea

of philosophy *generally*, I attempt next to point out the different views which have been entertained of its details; in other words, to classify the different *systems* which have been in vogue, more or less, in every age of the world. Having obtained four great generic systems as the result of this classification, I have endeavoured, in the first part of my plan, to trace their history from the revival of letters to the opening of the nineteenth century; in the second part, to follow up that history more minutely to the present age; and in the third part, to discover their tendencies as it respects the future.

I would beg leave, further, to make one or two remarks on the *phraseology* which I have found it necessary to employ, and to which some, perhaps, might be inclined to make objection. There are four expressions which occupy a very prominent place throughout the whole work, and those are—sensationalism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism. Now of these four, the first, I believe, is a word entirely new, and, therefore, demands some apology for its introduction. For some time I used the term sensualism, adopting it literally from the French philosophy; but the association which

that expression has with what is *morally* vicious was so strong, that I was soon induced to abandon it altogether. Next, I thought of sensism and sensationism, as being terms well adapted to describe the philosophy which builds itself up upon sense, or sensation ; but these seemed to fail in respect to taste and euphony. Lastly, I adopted the term sensationalism, as being at the same time more in accordance with the analogy of our language, and more euphonious to the ear.

With this explanation, I trust no further apology will be considered necessary, for the liberty here taken, of coining a new term. Had an old one been in existence, it would certainly have been employed in preference. The next term I mentioned above was *idealism* ; and this also required no little consideration ere it was adopted. The term rationalism would certainly have been better adapted to express a philosophy starting from conceptions of reason, rather than intimations of sense ; but then it has acquired such notoriety in the religious world, that I well knew the penalty of pressing it into my service. On the whole, therefore, as the term *idea* is now very frequently used to signify a mental conception, in opposition

to a sensational feeling, I thought it not inappropriate to apply the word *idealism*, in the general sense in which it is found in the following pages. The terms scepticism and mysticism need no comment; they are used in their ordinary philosophical sense, and only require to be accompanied by the single caution, that they be not understood on any occasion, in their peculiarly theological acceptation. With regard to such terms as philosophy, metaphysics, science, &c., I have not employed them in any peculiar and distinctive signification. I have preferred their loose popular use, as being more adapted to an historical inquiry; and trust that, wherever they are employed *distinctively*, the meaning intended to be conveyed will be clearly pointed out by the connexion, or some qualifying adjunct to the words themselves.

With regard to that portion of the work which relates to the German philosophy, I think it due to myself to remind the reader of the extreme difficulty there is in setting forth these German ideas in an English dress. The mere translation of any of the writings of Hegel or Schelling, or even of Kant himself, into English, would prove entirely unintelligible to the mass of English readers. The

only method of adapting their philosophy to the English eye, is, to master their ideas, and then, having thrown all books on one side, to attempt a reproduction of them, in our own style and language. How far I have succeeded in doing this, it is not for me to judge; but I can only express my conviction, that, by due reflection, the whole of what is really valuable in the German metaphysics, might be made just as comprehensible to all ordinary philosophical minds, in English, as it is in any other language whatever.

The only point to which I would further allude is, to the marks of rapidity and brevity, which the reader may notice, in discussing some of the most important systems which come before us. The fact is, that I intended, at first, simply to compile a manual, in one volume; when I found, accordingly, that the matter increased rapidly upon my hands, I constantly wrote under the desire of *compression*; and it was not till the work was more than half completed, that I found it necessary to enlarge my original plan. The first three chapters must, at any rate, have given but a very rapid glance at the subjects there treated of; the intention of them being simply to prepare the way



for a right estimate of philosophy in the present century. In the other part of the work, however, sufficient, I trust, has been written, to give a full portraiture of the principles upon which every separate school is founded.

The mature philosopher, moreover, will doubtless feel a want of depth in the discussion of some of the great points, which our criticism involves. It must be remembered, however, that I have not written so much for philosophers, as for the mass of educated and thinking minds in our country. With this view, I have, in many instances, thought it right and useful, somewhat to sacrifice depth and fulness of research to the desire for clearness and popularity.

Should the present attempt meet with a favourable reception, I shall consider it a sufficient inducement to go on in the effort I have commenced, of bringing the great questions respecting the grounds and validity of human knowledge, respecting the laws of thought, and respecting the history of their scientific development, before the public. Sure I am, that the mechanical tendency of the age is fast wearing itself out, and that the current of philosophical investigation will soon

begin to flow towards the elucidation of human nature, in its individual and in its social capacity. In such investigations, the history of thought will afford some of the principal data on which to work. Should the present manual only draw attention to the importance of the subject, and lead any other minds to direct their energies to it, I shall not fear that my labour will ultimately prove to be in vain.

#### ERRATA.

In Vol. I., pp. 480, 481, 482, and 483, the reader is requested to read *Comte* instead of *Compte*.

In Vol. II., pp. 408 and 419, Jouffroy is spoken of as a living writer. We had not heard of his much lamented death when these passages were penned.

# CONTENTS.

## INTRODUCTION.

	Page
SECT. I.— <i>Philosophy explained</i> . . . . .	1
SECT. II.— <i>Objections against Philosophy answered</i> . . .	5
1st Objection. That our knowledge is confined to sensible phenomena . . . . .	6
2d Objection. That the deepest thinkers come to opposite conclusions . . . . .	13
3d Objection. That philosophy has no practical utility . . . . .	19
4th Objection. That philosophy is superseded by revelation . . . . .	23
SECT. III.— <i>Rise of Philosophy inevitable</i> . . . . .	32
1. The power of accurate generalization is the true index of the extent of our knowledge .	34
2. Every branch of human knowledge, if fully generalized, leads to philosophy . . . .	37
Nature of philosophy illustrated . . . . .	44
SECT. IV.— <i>Primary Elements of Human Knowledge</i> . .	48
Aristotle's Categories . . . . .	50
Kant's Categories . . . . .	51
Cousin's Categories . . . . .	54
Analysis of our primary ideas . . . . .	57
SECT. V.— <i>Systems of Philosophy</i> . . . . .	64
Sensationalism . . . . .	64
Idealism . . . . .	65
Scepticism . . . . .	68
Mysticism . . . . .	69
Eclecticism . . . . .	71

## PART I.

ON THE PROXIMATE SOURCES OF THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

## CHAPTER I.

ON THE PROGRESS OF SENSATIONALISM, FROM THE PERIOD OF  
BACON TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

	Page
SECT. I.— <i>Commencement of Modern Philosophy</i> . . .	73
Revival of ancient systems . . . . .	74
New doctrines, advocated by Ramus, Telesius, &c. . . . .	75
Bacon . . . . .	76
His influence on speculative philosophy . . .	79
Hobbes . . . . .	86
SECT. II.— <i>Criticism of Locke</i> . . . . .	91
Theory of maxims . . . . .	101
Theory of ideas . . . . .	105
Locke's ontology . . . . .	114
SECT. III.— <i>Effects of Locke in England</i> . . . . .	119
Collins, Dodwell, &c. . . . .	120
Hartley . . . . .	121
Priestley . . . . .	128
Horne Tooke . . . . .	133
SECT. IV.— <i>Effects of Locke in France and Germany</i> . .	134
Condillac . . . . .	135
Helvetius . . . . .	143
St. Lambert . . . . .	144
Baron d'Holbach, &c. . . . .	145
French Encyclopædia . . . . .	146
Herder, Tiedeman . . . . .	147

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE PROGRESS OF IDEALISM, FROM THE PERIOD OF  
DESCARTES TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

	Page
<b>SECT. I.—<i>First Movement seen in</i></b>	
Descartes . . . . .	151
Geulinx . . . . .	158
Malebranche . . . . .	159
Spinoza . . . . .	162
<b>SECT. II.—<i>Second Movement.</i></b>	
English polemical idealism . . . . .	167
Lord Herbert of Cherbury . . . . .	169
Cumberland . . . . .	170
Cudworth . . . . .	171
Shaftesbury . . . . .	174
Wollaston, Clarke . . . . .	175
Butler . . . . .	178
Berkeley . . . . .	180
Drs. Price and Harris . . . . .	184
<b>SECT. III.—<i>Third Movement.</i></b>	
German idealism . . . . .	185
Leibnitz . . . . .	186
Wolf . . . . .	194
Kant . . . . .	197
Critic of pure reason . . . . .	198
Critic of the practical reason . . . . .	216
Critic of the judgment . . . . .	218
Estimate of Kant . . . . .	219
Reinhold . . . . .	224
<b>SECT. IV.—<i>Scottish Philosophy</i></b>	226
Hutcheson . . . . .	227
Adam Smith . . . . .	229
Dr. Reid . . . . .	230
His theory of perception . . . . .	234
Beattie and Oswald . . . . .	242

## CHAPTER III.

ON THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF SCEPTICISM AND MYSTICISM  
WHICH HAVE ARISEN FROM THE PRECEDING  
SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

	Page
Nature and relations of Scepticism and Mysticism . . .	243
SECT. I.— <i>Scepticism and Mysticism on the Continent, from the Period of Descartes to the Com- mencement of the Nineteenth Century</i> . . .	249
A. First period—originating from Descartes and Gassendi . . . . .	250
B. Second period—originating from Locke and Leibnitz . . . . .	261
C. Third period—originating with Kant and Condillac . . . . .	265
SECT. II.— <i>Scepticism and Mysticism in England, from the Time of Bacon to the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century.</i>	
Henry More . . . . .	268
Gale, &c. . . . .	270
David Hume . . . . .	273

## PART II.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS . . . . .	286
-------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN SENSATIONALISM.

SECT. I.— <i>Modern Sensationalism in England</i> . . .	301
A. Sensational metaphysicians . . . . .	302
Mill's (Jas.) Analysis . . . . .	303
Mill's (John Stuart) System of Logic . . .	327
— Controversy with Dr. Whewell . . .	330

# CONTENTS.

xxi

	Page
<i>B. Sensational moralists</i> . . . . .	337
1. Objective sensational ethics . . . . .	340
Paley's Utilitarianism . . . . .	341
Bentham's Deontology . . . . .	348
2. Subjective sensational ethics . . . . .	363
Doctrines of liberty and necessity argued	369
Socialism . . . . .	386
Remarks on the necessarian controversy	396
<i>C. Sensational physiologists</i> . . . . .	402
Use of physiology in philosophy . . . . .	403
Non-materialists . . . . .	409
Phrenology . . . . .	411
Materialism . . . . .	427
<b>SECT. II.—<i>Modern Sensationalism in France</i></b> . . . . .	451
Cabanis . . . . .	453
Garat and Volney . . . . .	458
Destout de Tracy . . . . .	462
Criticism of the French ideology . . . . .	466
Broussais . . . . .	477
Compte . . . . .	480

## CHAPTER V.—VOL. II.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN IDEALISM</b> . . . . .	1
<b>SECT. I.—<i>The Scottish School of the Nineteenth Century</i></b>	3
Dugald Stewart . . . . .	5
Dr. Thos. Brown . . . . .	19
Drs. Young, Mylne, Ballantine, and Aber-	
crombie . . . . .	41—43
Estimate of the Scottish philosophy . . . . .	44
Edinburgh Review—Sir J. Mackintosh and	
Sir W. Hamilton . . . . .	58
<b>SECT. II.—<i>The German School of the Nineteenth Century</i></b>	60
Analysis of it . . . . .	66
Fichte . . . . .	69
Schelling . . . . .	98
Hegel . . . . .	131



	Page
Hegelian school . . . . .	161
Herbart . . . . .	166
Latest writers . . . . .	177
<b>SECT. III.—<i>The English School of the Nineteenth Century</i></b>	<b>182</b>
<i>A. Scoto-English metaphysicians</i> . . . . .	185
Dr. Payne . . . . .	186
Isaac Taylor . . . . .	187
Mr. B. Smart . . . . .	190
Cambridge school of philosophy . . . . .	192
Professor Whewell . . . . .	195
<i>B. Germano-English Metaphysicians</i> . . . . .	199
Carlyle . . . . .	201
“Small books on great subjects” . . . . .	209

## CHAPTER VI.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN SCEPTICISM.

<b>SECT. I.—<i>Modern Scepticism generally—in England</i></b>	<b>211</b>
Absolute scepticism . . . . .	215
Scepticism of authority . . . . .	221
Scepticism of ignorance . . . . .	226
<b>SECT. II.—<i>Modern Scepticism in France</i></b>	<b>228</b>
M. de Maistre . . . . .	230
Abbé de la Mennais . . . . .	234
M. Ballanche . . . . .	245
Baron d'Eckstein . . . . .	247
Scepticism of ignorance in France . . . . .	252
<b>SECT. III.—<i>Modern Scepticism in Germany</i></b>	<b>254</b>
Kant as a sceptic . . . . .	257
Schulz . . . . .	261

## CHAPTER VII.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN MYSTICISM.

<b>SECT. I.—<i>Modern Mysticism generally—in England</i></b>	<b>266</b>
1. When knowledge is gained by a regular law of feeling . . . . .	275

	Page
Coleridge . . . . .	276
Taylor . . . . .	284
Greaves . . . . .	286
2. When knowledge comes through a fixed supernatural channel . . . . .	287
Sewell . . . . .	289
Wardlaw . . . . .	297
3. When knowledge is gained by extraordinary supernatural means . . . . .	299
SECT. II.— <i>Modern Mysticism in France</i> . . . . .	302
St. Simonism . . . . .	303
Fourier . . . . .	307
SECT. III.— <i>Modern Mysticism in Germany</i> . . . . .	308
Jacobi . . . . .	310
School of Jacobi-Kant . . . . .	319
Bouterwek . . . . .	320
Krug . . . . .	321
Fries . . . . .	323
Calker . . . . .	324
School of Jacobi-Fichte . . . . .	325
Schlegel . . . . .	325
Schleiermacher . . . . .	333
Novalis . . . . .	338
School of Jacobi-Schelling . . . . .	342
Schubert . . . . .	342
Baader . . . . .	345

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ON THE ECLECTIC SCHOOL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

SECT. I.— <i>Rise and Progress of Modern Eclecticism in France</i> . . . . .	350
M. Laromiguière . . . . .	353
M. Royer Collard . . . . .	359
Maine de Biran . . . . .	364

	Page
Cousin . . . . .	372
Jouffroy . . . . .	408
Damiron . . . . .	415
SECT. II.— <i>Collateral Branches of Eclectic Philosophy</i> . . . . .	420
B. Constant . . . . .	421
Madame de Staël . . . . .	422
M. de Gerando . . . . .	424
Physiological writers . . . . .	426
Germano-French writers . . . . .	430
Swiss writers . . . . .	434
Modern French writers . . . . .	436

## PART III.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### ON THE TENDENCIES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

SECT. I.— <i>On the Tendencies of Modern Sensationalism</i> . . . . .	448
A. In science . . . . .	448
B. In legislation . . . . .	460
C. In religion . . . . .	466
SECT. II.— <i>On the Tendencies of Modern Idealism</i> . . . . .	473
1. In science . . . . .	475
2. In legislation . . . . .	481
3. In religion . . . . .	488
SECT. III.— <i>On the Tendencies of Modern Scepticism</i> . . . . .	494
SECT. IV.— <i>On the Tendencies of Modern Mysticism</i> . . . . .	508
APPENDIX . . . . .	519

## INTRODUCTION.

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### SECT. I.—*Philosophy Explained.*

EVERYTHING that is brought into existence must have a *final cause*. The final cause of man's intellectual faculties is *to know*, and the material of knowledge is *truth*. The search after truth, therefore, is the natural sphere of our mental activity, and *philosophy* (which is the name we give to this process when it is carried on with intelligence and design) is at once a real want, and a necessary product of the human mind.

The process of knowing, however, is a very gradual one. The infant mind appears first to exist in a state of bare receptivity. The first intellectual impulse that manifests itself, is simply the desire of receiving impressions which pour in upon it from every side with the greatest possible intensity. As the mind develops these impressions are remembered, compared, and classified ;

so that, on our emerging from the cloud of our infancy, we find that we have been spontaneously active in gaining an extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of what we term the external world. This spontaneous activity, therefore, we find has even thus early given us a practical knowledge of outward things, in many of the relations which they hold to ourselves and to each other ; and the result of advancing years and continued experience is, in ordinary cases, simply to afford us the means of a wider observation, of a more extensive comparison, and of a more complete classification of them.

This knowledge of *phenomena* (of things as they seem) is sufficient for all the practical wants of human life, and the mass of mankind are content to confine their observation to them alone, without any inquiry respecting their real nature, the mode of their subsistence, or the medium by which the mind perceives them. The life of men, therefore, who are thus conversant about phenomena only, we term *spontaneous*. Their mind, stimulated by the external world, exercises its faculties without being reflectively conscious of a single mental operation ; impressions and ideas exist, but it is never asked how, or why, they exist ; mental operations are carried on, but it is never surmised in what manner they are carried on ; knowledge is gained, but no inquiry is raised about the grounds or certainty of it ; thought, in

a word, goes forth, but it never returns to render account of itself, or to inquire how it has been produced, or how far it is of any value as being an accurate reflection of the truth of things *as they are*.

Whilst, however, the spontaneous life has ever been that of the mass of mankind, there always have been minds that could not content themselves with knowing only the world of outward phenomena. Their mental activity having first gone forth from within to grasp the varied forms of the outward world, returned back, when it had accomplished this purpose, to inquire how the process had been managed, what were the powers of mind employed, and what confidence there is to be placed in the result. This process is what is properly termed *reflection*; and the reflective life, accordingly, is that which attempts to render a true account of the spontaneous life of man. The first man that reflected was the first speculative philosopher,—the first time that ever thought returned to inquire into itself and arrest its own trains, was the first commencement of intellectual philosophy, and once commenced, it was inevitable that it should go on as long as a problem was left in the mental or moral world to be solved. The primary efforts of reason to get at the ground-principles of human knowledge were naturally weak and imperfect; but as reflection progressed the path became clearer, until some one individual

of more than ordinary reflective power arrived, as he considered, at a solution of the main problems of human life, and sent it forth as such into the world. This was the first *system* of philosophy; and as successive attempts to do the same thing have differed in respect to their principles, their method, their extent, and their results, so they have given rise to the different *systems* of philosophy, which have been thrown up to the light of day by the ever-flowing tide of human thought, and the ever restless striving of the human reason.

Philosophy has been variously defined. By some it is termed "the science of the absolute and universal;" by others, it is viewed as that which is to explain the principles and causes of all things; whilst others, again, denominate it that branch of human knowledge which is conversant with abstract and necessary truth. All these definitions, and many others which might be mentioned, amount, in fact, very nearly to the same thing. If it were necessary to make the idea of philosophy still clearer, perhaps we might say that it is the science of *realities* in opposition to that of mere appearances, — the attempt to comprehend things as they *are*, rather than as they *seem*. Starting originally from phenomena, internal and external, it seeks to discover what reality there is beneath them, what is the law of their development, and what the cause of their existence. Thus, if it treat of the subjective world, it inquires into

the nature and validity of our faculties, into the true foundation of our knowledge and faith ; if, on the other hand, it treat of the objective world, it strives to look through the outward appearance of things, and comprehend the essence by which they are upheld ; having done this, it next determines the connexion that subsists between subject and object, and the common origin from which they both proceed. In carrying on this process of inquiry, the human mind can never content itself with a superstructure of knowledge which is either uncertain in its foundations or imperfect in any of its parts ; accordingly the philosophic spirit, when once begun, ever strives after a perfected system in which every phenomenon within or around it shall be accounted for, and every problem analyzed and solved. The history of the continued progress of this attempt to unfold abstract and fundamental truth, is the history of philosophy ; the different systems are but different movements of the whole process, and the united sum of such truth which now exists in the world is the fruit of philosophy up to the present time.

## SECT. II.—*Objections answered.*

Philosophy (regarded in the light in which we have placed it, as the striving of man's reason to comprehend the great problems of the world within and the world without, to probe their real



nature and assign their true origin) has often met with no little opposition, and even contempt, as being either in the nature of things an impossibility, or, if not impossible, yet, at least, altogether fruitless. It may be proper, therefore, to notice the principal forms in which one or other of these objections have been brought forward, and to weigh their validity.

I. It has often been urged that our possible knowledge is confined to phenomena, which come to us primarily through the senses, arranged and modified as the case may be by subsequent reflection; that all we have to do, accordingly, is to investigate and interpret *nature*; that this has acknowledgedly led, and may still lead us, to splendid results; but that when we step beyond the observance and classification of sensible phenomena, so far from getting at any deeper results, we are going away from the beat of human knowledge altogether, into absolute darkness and uncertainty. To this, however, the metaphysician replies, — that, however correct such a view of things may seem to the mere naturalist, yet it is impossible for the human reason as a whole abruptly to stop at the limits of mere observation, and rest satisfied with the results it affords without striving or desiring to advance beyond them. And if it be asked, why it is impossible for us to rest satisfied when the mind has done its best in making observations and classifying them; there

are many reasons that at once present themselves in reply. First, how do we know that our observations are correct? what is the ground of our confidence in our own sensations? are we quite certain that the representations of external things within our own minds is a correct delineation of the truth of things without? Of many of our sensations we become convinced by a very little reflection, that they cannot possibly have any external reality answering to them. Colours, for example, arise from the separation of the rays of light, and sounds are produced by pulsations of the air; but will any one assert that anything external exists at all similar to the impression of colours or sounds which we experience within? Where, again, is the outward reality to which the inward sensations of bitter and sweet correctly answer? It is true that such sensations may prove to us the existence of some powers of nature out of ourselves, but it is equally true that what we perceive is simply our own relation to these powers, that all we can directly observe in each case is our own subjective state, and that whatever these arrangements of nature may be *in themselves* separate from our own feeling, they are to us wholly unknown. And if this be the case with *some* of our sensations, why, it might be argued, may it not be so with *all*? If, for example, I *see* an external object, what do I perceive directly but my own subjective state, and where

is the proof that this subjective state is a perfect exemplar or pattern of the outward reality? Is there any ground of certainty on this point, or is there not? In either case philosophy is necessary, on the one hand to show the ground of the certainty, if there be any,—on the other, to prove to us that there is none, and thus to fix the *limits* of human knowledge; and show where we must begin to rest upon a simple and undemonstrable belief.

But the metaphysician goes a step further in his reply. You outward observers, he says, it is true, collect together many facts of a diversified and interesting character, but what is the nature of this knowledge? You know only passing phenomena, objects that are ever shifting and changing. The knowledge of *single* things, of single appearances, of single states and circumstances, however great in extent, is no *real* knowledge at all, for they may all pass away, or alter their relations; and then what *was* knowledge becomes error. I want to know if there is not such a thing as *absolute* knowledge,—whether there is not truth that must be ever and unchangeably truth,—whether there is not an immutable basis behind all this multiplicity of contingent phenomena;—whether I cannot find something that is *necessary*, and which will serve as a foundation on which to erect a system of real and unalterable science. If there be such absolute truth, it must be elicited by philosophical thinking; if there be *not*, then philosophy

is equally necessary to convince me that I can have no knowledge beyond what is contingent,—that is, that I can have no knowledge which may not at some future time be error and delusion.

So far the metaphysician answers the objection of the mere outward observer, even upon his own principle, “That all our possible knowledge is confined to the perception and subsequent classification of phenomena.” But now, after having shown that even in that case, there is need of employing speculative philosophy in investigating the validity of these phenomena, he comes to the principle itself, and asks, Is it veritably a true one? Is there *really* no other source of ideas besides sensations modified as they may be by subsequent reflexion? If it were really true that our knowledge is confined to ideas springing from that source, then how would the commonest sensation be possible? For what does sensation imply? It is not a mere impression standing isolated and alone, that has other isolated impressions going before and after it, since in that case our lives could have no thread of connexion in them; no, there is a *subject* as well as an *object* consciously implied in every sensation; the multiplicity of our sensible impressions is all referred to one individual mind, which remains ever essentially *the same*, although these varied lights and shades of feeling pass over it. Whence then does this notion of *self* arise? How does the first idea of it come to us? Not from

sensation ; for we have just seen that it virtually exists before sensations are possible. It must arise, therefore, from some prior source, and if so, furnishes us at least with one idea, for the matter of which we are not indebted to our sensational faculty. And if the fact of sensation points us to some idea previously existing in the mind, so likewise equally does the whole phenomenon of thought or reflection. There is a unity in thought. If we search our own consciousness, we find that however varied thought may be, however many rays it may send forth in all directions, yet they all coincide in one point, all emanating from a thinking self which is eternally the same undivided and indivisible Being. But whence comes the notion of this unity which we term self? Not from mere reflection ; for all reflection supposes it. We are obliged, therefore, to look about for some other origin of ideas until this matter shall be cleared up ; and it cannot be cleared up without the application of philosophy.

But if the objector is not satisfied with this refutation of his principle, the metaphysician goes on to adduce other ideas, and those of no little practical moment, which he feels equally inclined to remove from the whole province of sensible phenomena, however much they may be refined or generalized by after reflection. Whence, for example, come the notions of right and wrong? Twist them about as you will, and tell me by which of

the five senses the first elements of these notions come into the mind. If they indeed do come from reflection upon outward phenomena, it can only be from the observation that one course of conduct produces painful effects, and another pleasing ones; that right and wrong, therefore, are other terms for useful and injurious; that virtue is another name for utility, justice for convenience, and conscience a balancing of advantage and disadvantage:—a grave conclusion assuredly, and one that lies at the foundation of our practical life, one, therefore, which we ought not very readily to admit unless it be proved on very clear and philosophical grounds. Forth, then, with your philosophy to give us satisfaction. Whence again arises the notion of causation? If we appeal to our senses we can see, it is true, that one action uniformly follows another, and that one set of circumstances uniformly follows another set, as far at least as our own experience goes. But if that is a sufficient account of our notion of causation, what right have we to take for granted that a cause exists at all in cases where our senses give us no assistance, and which lie beyond the beat of our own personal experience? What, then, becomes of the great argument from final causes on which mainly rests our confidence in the being of a God? Why should we infer the existence of a supreme *power*, the creator and sustainer of all things, if the idea of causation contains no notion of power

whatever, and is made to rest simply on the faith of what we experience through the medium of sense alone? The objection accordingly which is thus urged against philosophical investigation may, if pushed to its full extent, become fatal to the groundwork both of morality and religion; at any rate, the duty lies upon the objector to show that it is not so; and in order to show that, he must enter into the metaphysical discussion which the whole question involves. We might adduce many other ideas, such as those of space, of time, of substance, of infinity, as well as some of the primary conceptions of mathematical truth, all of which carry with them the same appearance of belonging to a class of notions quite beyond the region of mere phenomena; those, however, which we have already mentioned may be sufficient for our present purpose.

But, lastly, the advocate of plain "common sense," says to the philosopher, You are no better off than we, after all; for you, too, are obliged to fall back upon *faith* in the end, and are equally unable with ourselves to give demonstration for every thing that you hold true. Assuredly, is the reply. Certain ultimate truths there must be from which all reasoning takes its rise; but the question is, which *are* ultimate truths and which are *not*? We all try to find demonstration as far as it is possible to do so, and as soon as it fails us there we begin to assume first principles, and trust to the autho-

rity of some primary belief. But the great point to be decided is, where are we to fix the *proper* boundary between the two? Where does demonstration really terminate, and the legitimate region of faith begin? The child trusts to faith for almost every thing. As the reason strengthens and becomes more active, our childhood's belief begins to give way to knowledge admitted on its proper evidence; and just in proportion to the vigour of our investigation may we move backwards the landmark between demonstration and faith, and include in the former what before lay in the province of the latter. The metaphysician understands the demonstration of every thing that the man of mere physical investigation holds true, but he wants to move the boundary a little further back, to see whether he cannot demonstrate what is usually taken for granted; and if he cannot demonstrate it, yet he will at least know what can be considered as proved, and what must be taken simply on the ground of its being a primary belief. Thousand to one, says Lessing, the goal of your philosophy will be the spot where you become weary of thinking any further,—a remark which should caution us not to be too hasty in interdicting any branch of investigation as transcending our faculties, and not to fix the boundaries of demonstrative knowledge without very sufficient grounds.

II. A second objection and prejudice against all philosophical investigation is taken from the alleged



fact, that the deepest thinkers on these subjects come to different, yea, even to diametrically opposite conclusions.

The sure and steady march of the mathematical sciences is pointed out as the model of what the fruits of metaphysical philosophy ought to be, and would be if it were a genuine branch of human knowledge. The fact, therefore, that such a steady progression is not found, but that contradictions appear to be ever multiplied as speculation goes on, is taken as an argument against the whole range of metaphysical inquiry.

That those which are termed the accurate sciences offer a peculiar facility for investigation, and are removed almost entirely beyond the reach of errors and contradictions, arises from their very nature; such, however, it must be remembered, is by no means the case with any other of the acknowledgedly genuine branches of human knowledge. In politics, for example, men of the greatest sagacity follow completely opposite theories as to what is, in the main, most conducive to a nation's prosperity; but should we therefore interdict the whole science of legislation and political economy as being without any ground of certainty, and utterly fruitless in its results? Is it not clear, on the contrary, that these differences of opinion are but the very means and movements by which the science as a whole progresses? Or, to take another illustration which may be within the reach of every one's

personal experience, are there not many different forms of Christianity built upon the common data on the ground of which we all alike receive its general authenticity? Have there not ever been contending parties and opposite conclusions, and do we infer from thence that the whole system is untrue, and that no certainty can possibly be arrived at, amidst the clashing opinions to which even the greatest minds are exposed? Far from it. Discussion is the very bulwark of truth—the only safeguard against the imperfection of the human mind,—the only chastiser of extravagance,—the only antagonist of dogmatism,—the only handpost that points us perpetually along the path of moderation, which is most commonly the path of truth. The little mind that looks upon contending sects around is scandalized, and says with Pilate in a jest, “What is truth?” without ever intending to listen for a reply; but the more expanded intellect sees in these same the strugglings of human thought by which it will gradually yet surely unfold the whole great system of religious truth from the germs that lie before it in the Word, or around it in the world. The same principle applies to the case of speculative philosophy. In all researches so recondite in their nature, and so wide and all-embracing in their extent, it was inevitable that one mind should follow out one branch, and push its conclusions in that direction to their furthest limit, and that another mind starting from a differ-

ent point of view and going to the same extreme on the opposite side should evolve conclusions that appear to be directly contradictory. The man, therefore, who throws himself into the stream of one particular system of opinions, and thinks to exhaust all human knowledge by that means, is sure in the end to suffer for his error by having his faith shaken in the results of all philosophical research; and then a shallow, unthinking "common sense" is by no means unwilling to take the alarm, and enstamp all philosophy as a vain and useless jangle of words to which it is very uncertain whether or not any true idea can be attached. The more enlarged mind, however, sees that in each particular philosophical tendency an additional step is taken along the road of human knowledge, all the error of which will, in time, be exploded by the opposite school, while the real substantial truth will remain. Analysis is the great instrument of all human investigation; and analysis to be scrutinizing and severe must be confined to one point at a time. Select, then, your point—single it out of the whole superstructure of truth—bend upon it the whole of your analytical force, and then what is the inevitable result? We answer—truth and error combined. Error there must be more or less from the isolation which is thus made of this one particular point from all its necessary relations; but this error is only an unavoidable step for the further discovery of truth, because the analysis

of every individual question is the more accurate in proportion as the whole mind is absorbed in it alone, to the exclusion of every other. Every school of philosophy, then, may be regarded as the analysis of one particular branch of philosophical truth; and it only requires a subsequent synthesis to put together the combined result of the different systems, in order to show what has been the net increase they have brought to the whole mass of human knowledge. To sober and earnest minds there is no such thing as *positive* error. To such all error is negative; it is a falling short of the fact of the case, it consists in isolation and incompleteness; so that all analysis may be said to result in positive and negative conclusions, in plus and minus quantities; and synthesis is the process by which the whole is summed up and the final amount determined. Now, if we look back steadfastly upon the past history of philosophy, we may see that it has ever had a progressive development; that each age has contributed its portion, greater or less, and that the agitation between the different schools has been, as it were, the pulsations of this forward movement. Thales and Pythagoras combined the vague theories of their age into their own respective systems. Without the former Democritus and the Atomists would have been impossible; and without the latter Parmenides and Zeno had never embodied in regular form the

tenets of the Eleatic philosophy. The struggles of these two schools paved the way for Socrates, and thus rendered both Plato and Aristotle possible. Without the former of these the early Christian philosophy would not have seen the light; and without the latter the scholastic philosophy could not possibly have arisen. But for the practical fruitlessness of the scholastic age, again, Des Cartes had not sought to recast the whole method of philosophical investigation, and without the results of the old organum before his eyes Bacon had never framed the new. Had Des Cartes, moreover, or some equivalent mind failed to point out the new road, Leibnitz had never trodden it, and the German philosophy were still but a possibility; and had Bacon never shown the practical power of induction, Locke had never applied it to the study of the mind, or Newton by its means furnished the key to the temple of the universe. As the course of the vessel that makes its way against the breeze consists of a series of movements, each one of which seems to bear it away from the true direction, yet brings it in fact so much further on its destined course: so the mind that can only view each individual tack which the philosophic spirit takes is apt to imagine, that every such movement carries it further from the true mark, whilst those, who can take the whole course in at one comprehensive view, see that these apparent deviations are all

necessary to bring us nearer and nearer to the centre of eternal truth.

III. These reflections lead us to the consideration of another objection, that has been often raised more especially against the practical utility of speculative philosophy,—namely, that even supposing it to be a real and genuine branch of human knowledge, yet it can only find a place in a very few minds, and must ever be completely unintelligible to the mass. This, therefore, is presented as an insuperable barrier against its ever becoming of any extensive advantage, or indeed of its having any kind of influence upon mankind at large. Such an objection, we reply, if insisted on, would prove fatal to the cause of almost every branch of human science. It is never expected, and indeed it is not possible, that the mass of mankind should be acquainted with the process, by which any kind of investigation whatever is carried on. The search after truth, even the truths of the phenomenal world, is a process to them completely enveloped in darkness; all they have to do is to reap the practical fruits of any discovery, when it is made, without casting one single thought upon the steps by which others have arrived at it. If we look for a moment at the law by which thought is propagated, we find that it always descends from the highest order of thinkers to those who are one degree below them; from these again it descends another degree, losing at each step of the descent

something more of the scientific form, until it reaches the mass in the shape of some admitted fact of which they feel there is not a shadow of doubt, a fact which rests on the authority of what all the world above them says, and which, therefore, they receive totally regardless of the method of its elimination. Take, for example, any great fact or law of nature ascertained by means of physical science. Such a fact is first of all perchance wrung from the most close and laborious mathematical analysis; a few perhaps may take the trouble to follow every step of this process; but the mass even of natural philosophers themselves are content to see what is the method of investigation, to copy the formulas in which it results, and then put it down as so much further accession to their physical science. The mass of intelligent, educated minds, again, with a general idea only of mathematical analysis, accept the fact or law we are now supposing, as one of the many beautiful results of investigations, which they acknowledge to be far beyond the reach of their own powers;—and from them, lastly, it descends to the rest of the community as a *bare fact*, which they appropriate to their own use simply as being a universally acknowledged truth. The first school-boy you meet would very likely tell you with some accuracy what is the rapidity of light; but as to any observations on the occultations of Jupiter's satellites, or on the phenomena of aberration, or any other such method of

computing it, on these he has never bestowed a thought. The commonest seaman that has learned the use of his sextant, applies to his own purposes all the necessary formulas of trigonometry; but as to the methods of investigating such formulas, such matters lie entirely out of his reach.

This law of the descent of thought, however, — this gravitation of ascertained truth from the higher order of mind to the lower, is not confined to the mathematical sciences, nor is it here alone that the results of investigation are transmitted by what may be termed *formulas*. There are such things as historical formulas, as formulas for the various theories of the fine arts, and so also are there philosophical or metaphysical formulas. The results of long and patient reflection, in this last case particularly, embody themselves in some general principle, and this principle, after it has been tested, gradually spreads itself downwards from mind to mind, until thousands act upon it every day of their life, to whom all philosophical thinking is completely foreign. When, therefore, the objection is raised, that metaphysical inquiries lie beyond the reach of the mass, and cannot practically subserve the general interests of mankind, it is entirely forgotten or overlooked, that the *results* of such inquiries are intelligible to all; nay, that they are amongst the most practically efficient and influential of all truths which can possibly exist in the mind of man. This assertion



is fully borne out by much that we meet with in the intellectual history of the past. How few could there have been amongst the multitude of mankind who, in the Middle Ages, ever read a page of Aristotle. And did Aristotle therefore exercise but little influence upon them? Far from it. The minds of those, who *did* think deeply, were completely moulded by his philosophy; these, again, governed the reflections of those immediately beneath them; and from them the results of Aristotelianism, mingling up as they did especially with the religious opinions of the day, reached the whole of the popular intellect. Look again at the sensualistic philosophy of France during the last century. The people at large, it is true, neither read Locke, from whose writings that philosophy professedly emanated, nor did they study the new edition of his principles as published and distorted by Condillac, nor did they understand the process by which Cabanis and others developed the system to its farthest consequences. But they had no difficulty in laying hold of what we may term the formulas of that philosophy—formulas which came before them in very intelligible propositions, declarative of complete materialism, together with an implied denial both of the doctrine of man's immortality, and the existence of a God. We are strongly inclined indeed to think, that the results of intellectual philosophy, really speaking, influence the mass of mankind practically

more than those of any other department of science whatever ; inasmuch as they bear most closely upon the very principles of all human action, elevate or depress the general feeling as to the worth and sanctity of virtue, and give a colouring to the popular religionism of the age. All this assuredly should remind us, that these results ought neither to be looked upon with indifference or contempt, or to be framed but upon the most patient and extended investigation.

IV. There is one more objection against intellectual philosophy in its widest extent, which requires some little consideration, namely, That it is entirely superseded and rendered unnecessary by revelation. Revelation, it is urged, is an authoritative view of human nature and of human destiny, and was given to perfect the otherwise imperfect knowledge we had of our position and prospects in the universe ; so that, to philosophise on these things, is no other than to go back to the state, in which mankind existed before they had access to this clearer and better light from heaven. Now, first of all, this conclusion can only have its full weight on the supposition, that the objects of revelation and of speculative philosophy are *all* identical ; or, at any rate, that there is no point touched upon in the latter, which is not sufficiently elucidated in the former. This, however, we can by no means admit to be the case. That revelation has thrown a vast light upon the

great problem of the world and of human destiny, we allow ; but that it was ever intended to give us there a complete system of philosophy, to erect an entire superstructure of human knowledge, and leave no problem to be solved in the whole region of mental, moral, or what we may more strictly call metaphysical investigation, we are far from being prepared to grant.

To instance, first, the peculiar department of psychology—who, it is asked, expects to find a complete analysis of our mental faculties and susceptibilities in the Bible? It is true, we find here and there in the pages of revelation, that the working of our mental powers is described so far as they have a direct bearing upon the religious faculty ;—it is true, also, that we see, pointed out for practical use or caution, the passions and desires, which are most likely to become dangerous or excessive ; and that some few conclusions, perhaps, might be drawn from the distinction, that is there made, between the soul and the spirit—the animal man and the spiritual man. These, however, are far from being placed before us in a scientific form, neither are they, by any means, *intended* to furnish a full account of our mental constitution. They are given simply for practical use, and accordingly leave open a large field of scientific investigation, from which many valuable results may be drawn by any mind, that can apply to it acute powers of analysis and research. Or to adduce still further

the department of morals. That a practical morality of the most elevated character runs through the whole of the Scriptures, and peculiarly through those of the New Testament, no one can fail to admit ; but, as these writings were intended for popular use, to come down to the habits of thinking common in all ages amongst the mass of mankind, we could not naturally expect to find there the *speculative* questions of morals either mooted or solved. As far as our practical necessities go, the morals of the Scriptures are *absolutely perfect*, and furnish an ideal of what the purity of our nature *ought to be*, which can be derived from no other source whatever ; but it was never intended, that all efforts of man's intellect on these points should be completely contravened, and repressed as by a voice from heaven, telling us that they could no longer be of any service, or answer any useful end. The speculative questions in morals, which are left untouched in the Scriptures, are amongst the most interesting and important to which the human mind can be directed. The inquiry, for example, "in what conscience essentially consists," whether it be a moral sense implanted in us,—or whether it be a moral judgment,—or whether it be the result of our natural sympathies,—or whether it be the cementing of all our feelings and faculties together into one great regulating principle, gives rise to an investigation which leads us to examine the very groundwork

of our moral constitution. The inquiry, again, as to what *virtue* is, objectively considered, — whether it arise from the eternal fitnesses of things, or from utility, or benevolence, or whether its ground is to be found only in the will of God, presents to us another point where there is scope for the acutest philosophical research. And if it be asked, *why* we should take the pains to search into these speculative questions of morality when the practical side is given us in perfection in the Scriptures; we answer, that the *intellect* of man ever struggles after satisfaction, as well as his moral and religious nature; and that, while the latter can be completely supplied from the Scriptures, the former must seek the ground of its satisfaction, and combine its materials into a complete superstructure of knowledge, by means of unwearied and laborious thinking. On these points, and on many others, such as those respecting human liberty and necessity, respecting the doctrine of providence in connexion with the subsistence of the material world, respecting our physical conditions here, as influencing the mind, and respecting the “physical theories of another life;” on such points as these there is room for many investigations, which are hardly mentioned, not to say exhausted, in the pages of revelation.

But we go a step further in answer to the objection, that revelation renders philosophical thinking unnecessary, and affirm, that the autho-

city of revelation itself must to a considerable extent rest upon it. All religion reposes upon the idea of God as its foundation. Without this idea, revelation itself has no authority, inasmuch as its authority is solely derivable from the fact of its coming from God. The being of a God, therefore, is a truth that must be impressed upon us before we open the very first page of inspiration; nay, its very first proposition would be unintelligible without it. In the beginning, says Moses, God created the heavens and the earth. But who is God? and where is the evidence of his existence? All these must be settled points before the Scriptures can be to us of the slightest authority, and they cannot be settled, when once started, without deep inward reflection upon nature, and upon man as its interpreter. But, perhaps, we shall be reminded that the Scriptures carry with them their own evidence of the divine existence, the evidence, namely, of miracles openly performed, and well authenticated. True, — to a certain extent they do, but to an extent which can by no means dispense with the other evidence we have mentioned; for what mind is there that would be convinced of the being of a God from the witnessing of some temporary change in the laws of nature, when it had totally failed of gaining such conviction from the perpetual and standing wonder of creation itself? Assuredly, if nature, in her most beauteous forms and most

striking operations, were insufficient to lead our minds to the conception of an efficient Creator, none of [what would then be] her freaks and wanderings would do so. Nay, when we speak of the evidence of miracles as testifying of the hand of God, that evidence, if I mistake not, derives all its strength from the previous confidence we have in the existence of an Almighty power the framer of the laws of nature, as we see them usually in operation, and which laws, we argue, could not be changed by any power *less* than that which first called them into being. If chance, or fate, or any other blind impulse could *create* the world, and fix its laws, it has likewise power to alter them; and if, therefore, our reflection upon the constitution of things around us as they are, and the application to them of the great law of causation is not sufficient to lead us to the conviction of an intelligent cause, from which they sprang, neither would a perpetual series of miracles be able to do so. Miracles, indeed, were never intended to convince any one of the *existence* of God, and it is nought but a misapplication of them to use them for this purpose; they were merely intended to convince us that this Being (of whose existence we have previous and higher evidence) operates in some particular manner, or through some particular medium. All revealed religion, accordingly, rests upon the pedestal of natural religion; all natural religion, again,

rests upon the existence of a God ; and the certainty of his existence must be derived from the relation of the laws of nature to those of the human mind. If these laws be not established, natural religion fails of a foundation ; and if the foundation of natural religion sinks, the whole authority of revealed religion sinks with it to a nonentity. Revelation, therefore, so far from putting a check upon philosophical investigation in reference to these topics, renders it, in fact, only so much the more necessary, and so much the more valuable in proportion as the superstructure, which by the aid of revelation we build upon it, becomes to us of the deeper importance.

One more thought we throw out upon this objection—namely, that philosophy, by investigating upon natural grounds the state and tendency of human nature, often renders a very essential service to the evidences of revelation. Revelation brings to us a vast number of facts, which it commends to our reception on the ground of testimony and authority. Now it is clear, that if any of these facts, which come to us primarily upon testimony and authority, can be verified by philosophy, they will carry with them a double evidence, and come home to us with a double weight. Men, who have thought most deeply upon the evidences of revelation, have ever felt how valuable was the accession of strength they attained, wherever scientific investigation



could be made to bear upon them. How many, for example, have attempted (we say not how successfully) to elicit a verification of the Mosaic deluge and cosmogeny, from the discoveries of geology; in how many instances have we been called upon to hail some fresh light, which physiology has succeeded in throwing upon the scriptural account of the origin of the human family; and on the same principle, who does not rejoice to see the scriptural representations of man's mental and spiritual condition borne out by close and accurate research into the nature and tendencies of the human mind? The greater be the number of the facts of revelation, which we can show to rest upon the basis of science as well as authority, the better is it for us, both as it regards the strength of their evidence, and the character of their influence. Philosophy, by carrying certainty with it to a given length, and pointing out difficulties where that certainty ends, is ever mild in its features and tolerant in its tone; on the other hand, the more implicitly we bow to authority, the less tolerant we become to those, who choose not to bow as obediently as ourselves. The mind always seizes with a kind of convulsive grasp those truths, for which it can give no very satisfactory account, as though the tenacity with which they are held would go to make up the deficiency in their evidence; and on this ground it is that those who are most ignorant, to prevent the appearance of ab-

surdity, commonly find it necessary to be most dogmatical. On the other hand, an abundance of knowledge and a strength of evidence, as they define more clearly the bounds of the known and the unknown, tend perpetually towards toleration ; a fact, which should make every ray of fresh light that is cast from any quarter upon religious truth of additional value to us. There are many facts, moreover, brought before our attention by revelation, which, if they cannot be reduced to a philosophical form, and be shown to rest upon a scientific basis, are yet rendered antecedently probable by the *analogy* they may be seen to bear to the ascertained laws of nature, or of our own constitution. The analogies of the natural world, for example, in many respects point us to the fact of the soul's immortality ; and still more strikingly do the elements of our own moral constitution point us to a perfect moral government, where the idea of human accountability shall find its ultimate completion. In all such cases as these, (which the reader may see admirably handled in the immortal work of Bishop Butler,) intellectual philosophy appears as the handmaid of revelation, not only aiding in making firm the foundation on which it rests, but by its results illustrating and confirming many of the most important truths which come to us on the authority of a Divine inspiration.

SECT. III.—*Rise of Philosophy inevitable.*

Thus far we have attempted to remove the chief objections which lead many to consider the philosophy, whether of a former age or of their own, as altogether valueless. Not only do we think, however, that these popular prejudices are groundless, but we go a step further, and regard speculative philosophy as a thing *absolutely inevitable*,—as inevitable as the wants, desires, and tendencies of the human mind can make it. If, from the fact of its universality, we may consider any branch of our mental activity whatever to be a necessary result of our constitution, assuredly we may do so with regard to the philosophic spirit. Every age of the world, and every nation, the mind of which has attained to any degree of cultivation, have had their different philosophies, that is, have attempted to unravel the problems of their own existence, and those of the universe they behold around them. The grave and contemplative Asiatic silently brooded over these subjects in the earlier stages of man's history; the lively and versatile mind of Greece could not fail to think deeply, and to grapple earnestly with the same great questions; the Roman intellect, at first taken up with the practical toils of warfare and government, was constrained, so soon as the opportunity came, to tread in the path of philosophy, that had been thus

already explored ; and Christianity, when it offered peace to the spirit of man wounded by the consciousness of moral imperfection, and satisfied the heart's longing after immortality, did not repress, but rather incited the intellect to greater exertion in order to sound the depths of our being, and fully to comprehend our relation to the Infinite and the Eternal. The Middle Ages, which witnessed the almost total decline of literature, present us still with the spectacle of the human reason struggling on amidst all the surrounding darkness, in order to look beneath the phenomenal world, and to seek after the foundations of human knowledge ; and ever since the revival of our modern civilization has given a fresh impulse to the human mind, the whole region of speculative philosophy has been one of the principal objects, upon which it has applied its awakened energies. It is no more possible for the spirit of philosophy to become extinguished, than for the poetic fire to die out of humanity, or the religious faculty to cease to operate within the mind of man ; for as long as the impulse of the intellectual faculties exists, it will be ever seeking after satisfaction. That philosophy, then, will ever flourish among mankind in every age, we may regard as a fair inference from past experience ; but now we may go a step beyond experience, and show that its rise is rendered *inevitable* by the very nature of human knowledge,

and the impulse we possess for acquiring it. To prove this we must establish two facts:—FIRST, *That the power of accurate generalization is the true index, by which the extent of our knowledge is measured*; and SECONDLY, *That every branch of human knowledge, if generalized to its full extent, brings us into the region of metaphysical research.*

To establish the former of these two principles, we must remember, that human knowledge does not consist in the bare collection and enumeration of facts; this alone would be of little service were we not to attempt the classification of them, and to educe from such classification general laws and principles. The knowledge, which consists in individual truths, could never be either extensive or definite,—for the multiplicity of objects which then must crowd in upon the mind only tends to confound and perplex it, while the memory, overburdened with particulars, is not able to retain a hundredth part of the materials which are collected. To prevent this, the power of generalization comes to our aid, by which the individual facts are so classified under their proper conceptions, that they may at the same time be more easily retained, and their several relations to all other branches of knowledge accurately defined. The colligation and classification of facts, then, we may regard as the two first steps, which are to be taken in the attainment of Truth.

The next step after this is to enquire, how these facts may be accounted for; in other words, to consider, what more general fact can be discovered, in which the particular ones shall be contained. In natural science we hear frequent mention made of ascending from particular to general truths,—of different stages of generalization which occur in this process,—and of the highest step to which all the others are preparatory, and in which they are included. To illustrate the meaning of these expressions, let us take the case of Astronomy. Any careless observer can perceive the ordinary facts upon which that science is founded. The labourer at his daily toil knows that the moon, the sun, and the planets, rise and set at particular periods. The slightest attention, again, would be sufficient to tell us, that the moon goes through a certain course of changes within a month, and the sun within a year. All these facts, however, are included in, and explained by the more general fact, that the earth moves in an orbit round the sun, and the moon round the earth. This fact, again, is included in the dynamical law, by which the movements of all the heavenly bodies are regulated, and this again in the universal law of gravitation. The difference, therefore, between the knowledge which a careless spectator possesses of any one of the *simple* facts of Astronomy and that possessed by the man of science, lies here—that the one observes the phenomenon simply as a pheno-

menon, while the other investigates it, places it in connexion with other facts, ascends from the particular to the general, and gets so much nearer to the universal law or principle from which it proceeds. The man who only observes the simple phenomena, we say, possesses the least knowledge; he who ascends to the more general propositions enlarges his knowledge proportionably, and lastly, *his* knowledge is the greatest who attains the highest point of generalization and educes *the fact* which includes in it all the rest. If we were to adduce any other branch of human knowledge, we should find that the same principle would hold good, that the ignorant observer might know as much of the bare facts as any one else, and that the philosopher in every case owes his superiority to the process of generalization. In asserting this principle, of course we suppose that the generalization is not hasty and inaccurate, since in that case it could only give rise to false theories; we take for granted, that it is a synthesis drawn from a sufficiently wide and accurate analysis. When this is the case, it becomes evident that accurate generalization, implying, as it does, both the most complete observation of the individual phenomena, and a reference of them to their proper conceptions and laws, is always the index of our real knowledge; and just as far as we can legitimately extend it, so far may our knowledge be said to reach. Viewing this first principle, then, as valid,

we shall go on to illustrate, and substantiate the *second*, namely, that every branch of human knowledge, if generalized to its full extent, brings us into the region of metaphysical research; that there is no subject of investigation but tends incessantly to this point; that even those subjects which are most unlike in themselves and which lead us through entirely different fields of mental labour, yet all, if you trace them far enough, meet together in their first principles, and all enter the peculiar region of the metaphysician before you have reached their ultimate basis.

To illustrate this truth almost any subject will answer equally well. The chemist, for example, investigates matter: tracing it by means of observation and experiment through all its different combinations and changes. But who does not know, that the last question at which he arrives, that which weighs the relative claims of ultimate atoms and of infinite divisibility, is one of a purely metaphysical nature? The mechanician studies the laws of forces as exhibited in the material universe, but the explication of the very conception, upon which the whole science rests, that of *power* or causation, again brings us into the province of speculative philosophy. The fundamental axioms and definitions of pure mathematics are just of the same nature; they, too, can only be investigated and explained upon metaphysical grounds. If from these branches of science we turn to that



allotted to the physiologist, we find ourselves in another region of thought, at the basis of which lies the mysterious idea of life;—an idea which is most closely connected with some of the most interesting problems in the whole range of speculative philosophy.

It is not only those subjects, however, which come under the notion of *science*, that lead us up through the several stages of generalization to the ethereal regions of metaphysical speculation; every branch of human knowledge, if investigated to a similar extent, leads exactly to the same point. Take, for example, the province of the historian, a province which appears at first sight to confine itself entirely to an investigation and a description of external facts. The primary object of the historian, it is true, may be considered simply this; to discover events as they occurred, and to describe them in the best possible manner; but the true philosophical historian is far from being content with this. He looks upon the phenomena of human life and activity as the direct result of human nature, as it exists in the world, and seeks to trace them to their proper source in the constitution of the human mind. The subject of government, as it has appeared in the different states and countries of our earth, leads directly to the deeper question concerning the foundation of man's natural rights; for all government is constructed upon the primary conception of right or

justice, and must be adjudged as fundamentally good or bad according to its agreement or disagreement with it. If we search again into the history of civilization and learning, or of the arts and sciences as they have sprung up and made greater or lesser advancement amongst different nations, here, too, we are insensibly led to the study of the human mind. All civilization is an effect which must spring from certain causes, and the object of the philosophical historian in tracing it, is to point out the influence, which various forms of government, various features of natural scenery, various modes of religion, and various circumstances in general, have had in stimulating man to exertion in different directions, and towards different objects. History is, in fact, a detail of the various manifestations of mind, as they have been impressed upon the surface of human life; and the philosophical historian will attempt to deduce from the past those laws of human action, which have heretofore moulded the features of society, and which we may predict will, under similar circumstances, operate in a similar manner for the future. This whole branch of human knowledge, therefore, leads us inevitably to the study of man, to the investigation of the primary laws of the human mind, and only when it has pursued its enquiries to that point does it attain a high degree of generalization, and give us a full satisfaction in its results.

To adduce another instance of the intimate connexion that subsists between the various branches, to which our mental activity is directed, and speculative philosophy, I would point out that of the fine arts. Here, as in most other subjects, there is a practical, and a theoretical side, the former of which, although it may be successfully pursued by itself, is nevertheless based upon the latter. Poetry may be loved, and may be created by the impulse of an enthusiastic soul, and the exertion of a lively imagination, without any reflection upon the sources from which the poetic fire is kindled; but the enquiry will still force itself upon us in due time—What is enthusiasm, and what is the nature of creative imagination, and what is the ground upon which the pleasure we derive from all such sources depends? The answer to this, it is evident, will lead us into abundant metaphysical enquiries long before we have probed the subject to its complete elucidation. Painting, again, may be cultivated simply by attention to practical rules, especially when there is a natural aptitude for it; but then all the pleasure we derive from it arises from our susceptibility of the emotion of beauty. We ask, therefore, What is Beauty? How is it excited? In what does it consist? Is the highest beauty *real*, and has it ever been actually embodied in nature? or is it *ideal*, and only imaged in the mind? Must the painter strive to copy exactly what exists, or has he to seek a perfection which

is only floating within his own mind, and which he must be perpetually endeavouring to transfer from the inner chamber of imagery to the canvass before him? The decision of this point, one way or the other, will give rise to completely different schools of painting. The advocate of the *beau-real* would never become another Raphael, nor would the advocate of the *beau-ideal* ever form a second Vandyk.

If it be asked, why we should employ our minds in theorizing on these different subjects, when the practical application of them can be made without any knowledge whatever of their theory, we answer, because man is formed with a desire to *know*, as well as to *do* and *feel*, because the love of knowledge is an impulse quite as strong as those other impulses which lead more directly to action, and because we can no more be happy without satisfying the former, when it once takes possession of our mind, than we can without satisfying the latter.

If from the fine arts we descend into the pursuits and toils of practical life, here, too, we soon find that we are conducted step by step, as we proceed backward towards first principles, into the region of metaphysics. Our practical life consists, for the most part, in the performance of *duties*. But what is a duty? What claim has it over our conscience, and on what is grounded its obligation? I have duties to perform towards my country. Is patriotism, then, an emotion implanted by nature,

and if so, to what extent should I compromise my own natural rights in favour of the community at large? The whole question of the rights of nature, to which we are thus brought, leads us, as we before remarked, into one of the most fruitful of all discussions on man's constitution and position in the present world. I have other duties, moreover, to perform in social life, and again others which relate simply to my own moral being. But in such cases, what is the ground, and what the rule of morality? To elucidate these questions, we must take the torch of philosophy to our aid, and only when we have traced back the whole theory of our practical life to its philosophical principles, do we find a basis upon which we can rest with any mental satisfaction.

These few instances, perhaps, may be sufficient to elucidate the fact, that all generalization, whatever be the subject to which it is applied, tends to lead us into philosophical researches, so soon as ever it begins to touch upon first principles. Other arts and sciences aim at particular objects, accomplish particular purposes, and carry on their investigations only to a particular extent. This being accomplished, the end of each is satisfied. Philosophy, on the contrary, seeks the *completion* of our knowledge; it lays bare the hidden foundations upon which all other sciences rest, and weighs the validity of the axioms which they tacitly assume. No sooner do we view these dif-

ferent branches of human knowledge with the eye of the speculative philosopher, than we begin at once to see that the courses of them all are convergent, tending perpetually to one point. Many of the minor channels, after being followed backward for a certain distance, merge into the course of some wider stream. As we go still further back the channels become fewer, though, at the same time, wider and deeper; but still some few remain distinct from each other, and ever exhibit a cloud of darkness enveloping their source, until the philosophic spirit dares to enter the cloud, and trace their course up to the very point where they all unite. On this account, no doubt, philosophy may sometimes incur the charge of vagueness and indistinctness in its operations and results; but instead of joining in this complaint we should rather admire the courage and intelligence, that dares to penetrate into what was before a region of cloud and darkness, that succeeds in gaining new glimpses of an unknown land, and that struggles on against almost insuperable difficulties, even at the risk of here and there losing the road to its great results. Far should we be from regarding it as presumptuous to enter these sacred limits, or because philosophy is sometimes bewildered in the mazes it attempts to track, denounce its whole attempt as vain and fruitless.

Let us now sum up the results of the foregoing considerations in a few words. Man possesses

intellectual powers, the object and constant tendency of which is the acquisition of knowledge. The advancement of knowledge is measured by the power of accurate generalization, and all generalization, when sufficiently extensive, brings us to the investigation of first principles, that is, to the region of speculative philosophy. Hence we conclude that the rise of philosophy is *inevitable*, being necessitated by the very nature of human knowledge, and the innate tendency we possess to acquire it.

From this point of view we can now gain a clearer insight into the true idea and real office of philosophy properly so called. Striving as it does to unite all the various objects of mental pursuit, to complete in form the pyramid of human knowledge, to bring even the very foundations to view, it may be regarded as the *science of sciences*, as that which shews the connexion and the basis of all the rest. The intellectual philosophy, accordingly, of any age may be regarded as the *last word* which the reason of that age pronounces, inasmuch as its laws, politics, arts, literature, and to a certain extent its peculiar views of religion also, are but the reflex of the philosophy which is then supreme. Or perhaps it might be more accurate were we to say, that the intellectual spirit of any epoch, that which manifests itself in the various channels of literary and practical life, finds in philosophy its highest expression, and shews there most clearly

its real undisguised form. This will appear more evident if we consider that philosophy places every subject in its most abstract light, and seeks to bring every thing it touches upon into the region of clear and definite thought. Now there is in mankind at large a process of latent thought, spontaneously produced by the spirit of the age in which they live; but which is only seen and acknowledged by the mass in its outward and visible effects. Men, for the most part, view the thoughts and conceptions, by which their minds are governed, only in the peculiar phases which the literature, the arts, the religion of the age assume,—for these are the shrines on which the divinities they worship are represented in a symbolical form. On the other hand, the ideas which can only operate upon the mass of mankind through some external channel, and in some objective form, become to the philosopher strictly subjective. He strips them of all their exterior dress, separates the mere appendages from the essence, and views them, not as something out of himself, but as parts or products of his own individual consciousness. In the case of the former, the subject, which observes, entirely separates itself from the object, which is observed. The power of thought goes forth spontaneously, exerts itself spontaneously, and then embodies itself unconsciously in various symbols, which are then looked upon as having an independent existence: in the philosopher, this same thought, which had



been hitherto spontaneous, becomes reflective, and the distinction of subject and object is destroyed in the complete identity that takes place, when thought becomes the object of its own study and contemplation. It is in philosophy, therefore, that the thought of every age comes to the proper consciousness of itself, and appears stripped of the different dresses in which alone it is recognised by mankind at large.

In every period of the world there are some few great ideas or principles at work, which though sunk deeply and almost hidden at the very core and centre of the spirit of the age, are yet working themselves outward, and impressing their shapes upon every feature of society. What do we mean when we speak of great problems, which are gradually evolving their own solution in the progressive advancement of human things? Is not the real meaning of such expressions something of this nature? That there is some great thought which is lying at present half unconsciously in the minds of the people, and which is emerging gradually but surely more and more into the light of day? Every age assuredly has some such thought, which appears and reappears in a thousand different forms. It shows itself in the habits and customs which then arise; it shows itself in the spirit of the laws and institutions which are then established; it shows itself in the different schools of the fine arts which ever take the colouring and

type of the age that gives them birth ; it shows itself in the literature which is then most ardently pursued ; and to no little extent does it show itself in the popular forms of religion which then gain favour and celebrity. The thought which thus almost unconsciously governs the age, at length comes forth in its purest and most simple form, separated from all the extraneous material, with which it is mixed up, by the severe analysis to which it is subjected in the crucible of an enlightened philosophy. There is, if we look deep enough, an intellectual cause to be assigned for the customs and manners of society ; there is a psychological ground from which spring the different forms of law and government ; similar reasons may be found for the rise of the imaginative arts, of the different fields of literary pursuit, and even of the various shades of religious worship ; for there are but few comparatively who, uninfluenced by the spirit of the age, look through all the forms and phraseology even of Christianity itself, and gaze face to face upon the eternal ideas which they embody. It is the spirit of philosophy, therefore, that is to search for the ground of all these multifarious phenomena, to look under the surface for the ideas, from which they all spring ; to trace every manifestation of intelligence in human society to those primary laws of our constitution to which they all owe their birth, and to seek thus the completion of our knowledge by laying bare

the whole superstructure down to the one simple foundation on which it all reposes. Such attempts accordingly we consider to be inevitable, called forth as they are by the natural impulse of the human mind to investigate truth to its most universal and abstract forms, and to discover the primary elements from which all knowledge takes its rise.

#### SECT. IV.—*Primary Elements of Human Knowledge.*

The advancement of human knowledge we have already seen to be indicated by the progress of accurate generalization. The most ordinary ideas of mankind are the most complex, and the effect of the united process of abstraction and generalization is gradually to simplify them until we arrive at the ultimate elements of which they consist. We may illustrate this by a reference to the progress of chemical science. The objects of nature by which we are surrounded are extremely complex, and the forms which they assume infinitely diversified. The chemist begins his researches by classifying them under different heads; by noting down certain properties which many in common possess, until he gradually arrives at simpler materials. As his investigation goes on, the analysis becomes more close and accurate, and the ultimate point at which it all tends is to discover the original

elements of which the whole material universe consists. In the same manner, the object of the metaphysician is to analyze thought, to reduce the multiplicity of our mental phenomena to a few general heads, and thus ultimately to discover the primary elements of which all knowledge consists. Before we enter upon the history of philosophy, therefore, it will be necessary to point out what the primary elements really are, as our classification of the different systems of philosophy will mainly depend upon the view we take of this point.

In deducing these elements, it is not my present intention to go into a full discussion of the question, since this would bring us too rapidly upon the most difficult problems that are to be found in the whole range of metaphysics; all we shall now do is, simply to indicate in few words the results which have been arrived at by the most acute analysts, and to follow their track until a more clear and correct one shall be pointed out.

Now, in generalising our knowledge, so as to deduce the ultimate elements of which it consists, there are two methods which may be employed. Either we may make a classification of all objective things around us, as being the *material* of our thoughts and feelings; and having reduced them to their most universal heads, regard these as the required elements; or, on the other hand, we may analyse our consciousness, and having reduced the mental processes we find

there to the smallest possible number, assume these as the elements from which all the multiplicity of our thoughts proceeds. The one consists of a classification of the *objects* of our knowledge,—the other is a dissection of thought in its *subjective* phases. The former of these methods, it is well known, was pursued by Aristotle—the first man who undertook the gigantic task of reducing the multiplicity of all the objects of human knowledge to a few general heads. The result of this attempt was the *ten categories*, which will ever remain a standing monument of his wonderful power, both of analysis and of generalisation.

Perhaps it may seem unnecessary to enumerate anything so universally known as these categories, but we give them here to assist the reader in drawing a comparison between the result of Aristotle's investigations on this point, and that of some authors, who have given other classifications upon different principles. They are as follows:—  
1. Substance; 2. Quality; 3. Quantity; 4. Relation; 5. Action; 6. Passion; 7. Place; 8. Time; 9. Posture; 10. Habit.

That this enumeration is complete in the sense of being all-embracing, there can be but little doubt; it appears impossible to imagine the existence of any object of human thought, externally considered, which might not be fairly reduced to one of these heads. Admitting, then, the principle upon which Aristotle proceeds, we

may regard his classification not, indeed, as perfect, since a much closer analysis might be made ; but still, as being on the score of completeness eminently successful. So much so, indeed, did it appear to other minds, that no improvement was ever *attempted* upon it for more than two thousand years.

The intellectual effort, however, which Aristotle put forth to deduce the elements of human knowledge, was renewed by Kant upon the other, or subjective principle. Instead of looking to the outward materials of our knowledge, and seeking the primary elements from an analysis and generalisation of these, he looked to the mind itself, inquired into the fundamental conceptions under which everything external must be viewed, and upon these conceptions constructed a complete table of categories. Aristotle had classified the *matter* of our thoughts, Kant undertook to classify the *forms* ; the one deduced the objective, the other the subjective elements in human knowledge. Admitting, as did both, that all our ideas must have their raw material from without, and that this material is put into shape and order by the powers or laws of the human understanding, Aristotle, with his sensational tendency, sought to accomplish his object by investigating the former, while Kant, with his ideal tendency, sought the same object by investigating the latter.

In order, then, to accomplish this purpose, Kant

showed that there are three great faculties in man, each of which has its own laws or modes of operation. These are (to use a plain English phraseology)—Sensation, Understanding, and pure Reason. Sensation gives the matter of our notions; understanding gives the form, while reason brings unity and connexion to the whole exercise of the understanding, and aims ever at the infinite, the unconditioned, the absolute. The forms or categories of sensation are two—Time and space. It is the *where* and the *when* that is determined by this faculty, since everything we perceive must by that very act be placed in some given time, and in some given space. The laws of the *understanding*, which are more peculiarly denominated “Categories,” by Kant, are reduced to *twelve*,—these twelve falling under four general, or head-categories. 1. Under the head of Quantity, we have Unity, Plurality, and Totality; 2. Under the head of Quality, we have Affirmation, Negation, and Limitation; 3. Under the head of Relation, we have Substance, Causality, and Reciprocity; and lastly, Under the Head of Modality, are contained Possibility, Actuality, and Necessity. These are, according to Kant, the twelve conceptions in relation to which everything really existing must be viewed. Then, lastly, comes the highest faculty of man, that of pure Reason, the form of which is absolute unity; and which, according as it is directed to substance, or to phenomena, or to

the ideal of perfection, leads to the three irreducible ideas--of the Soul (the absolute subject), of the Universe (the totality of all phenomena), and of God (the all-perfect essence). To sum up, then, the whole analysis which Kant gives us of our intellectual nature, or, as he would term them, modes of our intellectual being, we have two for our Sensational Faculty, twelve for the Understanding, and three by which the Reason strives after absolute unity in its ideas; making in all seventeen categories. The fuller explanation of Kant's doctrine of the categories, we must leave till we come to the consideration of the Kantian Philosophy in its proper place.

The influence of Kant in Germany drew the attention of philosophers mainly to the one point, which he had treated with so great skill and acuteness--namely, the determination of the fundamental laws of thought, or the primary elements of our intellectual being. As the analysis became more close, doubts were entertained as to the correctness of his classification. The number of these fundamental laws or primary elements became thus gradually reduced, and the foundations of intellectual science by degrees confined within narrower limits. The history of this process will be pointed out more particularly hereafter; the fruits of it, to which only we can now refer, have been abundantly reaped, and still further matured, by one of the first of living philosophers, M. Cousin, who, with singular depth and clearness,



has criticised the labours of Kant, and by the application of all the rigour of more modern analysis, has reduced the whole of the Kantian categories to *two fundamental ideas*.

According to Cousin, then, all our thoughts may be reduced to the two primitive ideas of *Action* and *Being*; the one giving the category of causality, the other of substance; the one implying the relative, the contingent, the particular, the phenomenal; the other implying the absolute, the necessary, the universal, the infinite. Without entering into the abstruse details, by which the categories of Kant are referred to these heads, it may be sufficient to point out how these two fundamental ideas are deduced, and what they severally contain; and, perhaps, it is impossible to give this deduction in clearer and more concentrated language than that which has been employed by M. Cousin himself. "The human reason," he says, "in whatever manner it develops itself, whatever it grasps, on whatever it meditates; whether it stop short with the observation of surrounding nature, or whether it penetrates into the depths of the inward world, conceives of all things under the type of two ideas. If it examines number and quantity, it is impossible for it to see anything there more than unity and multiplicity. The one and the diverse, the one and the multiple, unity and plurality, these are the two elementary ideas of reason, in which every consideration relative to number terminates.

If it occupies itself with space, it can only conceive of it under two points of view, those, namely, of bounded or determined space on the one side, of absolute space on the other. If it occupies itself with existence, if it views things under the sole respect that *they are*, it can only conceive of the idea of absolute existence, or the idea of relative existence. Does it think of time? It conceives either of time as determined, (time properly so called,) or of time *in itself*, absolute time—namely, eternity; in the same manner as absolute space is immensity. Does it think of forms? It conceives either of a form that is finite, determined, limited, measurable; or of something which is the principle of this form, which is neither measurable, nor limited, nor finite; in a word, it conceives of the infinite. If it thinks of movement or action, it can only conceive of limited action, and the source of limited action; of powers and causes that are bounded, relative and secondary on the one hand, or of an absolute power, a first cause on the other, beneath which, in respect of action, it is not possible to seek or to find anything. If it thinks of all exterior and interior phenomena, which develop themselves around us—of this whole moving scene of events and accidents of every kind; there, again, it can only conceive of two things, the manifestation and appearance, as simple appearance and simple manifestation; or of that which while it appears,

retains something that does not pass away in the appearing—that is, of being in itself; or, to take the language of science, we here conceive of phenomenon and substance. In thought again, it conceives of thoughts which refer to this thing or that, which may be or may not be; and it conceives of the principle of thought in itself—the principle which exists, without doubt, in all our relative thoughts, but which is never exhausted. In the moral world, it conceives of certain things as beautiful or good; and then it inevitably brings there also these same categories of the finite and infinite, which become now the perfect and the imperfect, the beau-real and the beau-ideal, virtues with the miseries of reality, or the saint in his elevation and unsullied purity. These, as it appears to me,” adds M. Cousin, “are all the elements of human reason. The outward world, the intellectual world, the moral world, all are subjected to these two ideas. Reason only develops and can only develop itself on these two conditions. The great division of ideas now universally accepted, is that into contingent and necessary ideas. This division, in a more circumscribed point of view, is the reflex of that at which I stop, and which you can represent to yourselves under the formula of unity and multiplicity, of substance and phenomenon, of absolute cause and relative causes, of the perfect and imperfect, of the finite and the infinite.”

Such is M. Cousin's ultimate reduction of the primary elements of all our knowledge. As, however, the category of causality contains in it two very important and very distinct ideas, it may be as well to give another and a simpler deduction of the great fundamental conceptions of the human mind; one which may, perhaps, place the whole question in a somewhat clearer light.

The first and most obvious idea that we possess within our consciousness, is that of our own existence. The notion of *self*, or of *the me*, as it has been so often and so significantly termed, must necessarily be a primitive and a universal notion, since it is implied in every sensation we experience, in every thought we create, in a word, in every mental act we perform. We all feel conscious that there is something we call *ourselves*, which possesses, and can exert power, and to which as a fundamental unity all the multiplicity of our thoughts and feelings are to be referred. This power, however, or energy, which we variously call the will, the acting and knowing principle, or *the me*, is not an infinite and absolute power. On the contrary, it finds itself bounded, resisted, and opposed on every side. There is not an effort we put forth, but we find it limited and circumscribed by some counter force, which we are conscious really *exists*, and which acts upon us independently of ourselves. No sooner do we become cognisant of self, and of the power we possess of willing and

acting, than we find all around a world that offers resistance to us at every point, together with phenomena and laws that often seem directly in contradiction to our own volitions, and which, if not attended to, would instantly involve us in suffering and death. To the idea of self there stands opposed, therefore, the idea of something which is *not self*; or, as it has been otherwise expressed, the *me* finds around it other existences that are separate from us, and which, therefore, we may term the *not-me*, as being the most general phrase by which it can be denominated. The one of these ideas, indeed, supposes and involves the other. We could have no distinct notion of self, but as opposed to, and separate from, other existence around us; nor could we have any notion of an external world, but as something which is opposed to and separate from ourselves.

These, then, are two of the most fundamental ideas of the human mind: that of self on the one side, with its intelligence and its liberty; that of a physical world on the other, with its *power* of inertia—a world to whose laws we are to some extent subjected, and which we have, by mingled obedience and resistance, to bend and mould to our necessities and desires. So far, however, we are not yet out of the region of the finite. The *me*, as we have seen, is limited in its actions and volitions by the *not-me*: it is a finite cause, that can be resisted and changed variously by

other causes which act around it. Nature *too* is finite. It can only oppose us to a limited extent, and we can in our turn resist and modify it. Both of these ideas, therefore, come under the notion of the relative, the limited, the bounded, the finite, the phenomenal; and both equally belong to the category of causality, the former being a voluntary or intentional cause, the other a blind and fatal one.

These two general ideas, however, which we have thus placed under the category of causality, by no means exhaust all the materials of thought that exist in the human mind. Just in the same manner as *the me* implies the notion of a *not-me* from which it is distinguished, and by the perception of which we become conscious of our own separate individuality in the whole universe of things around us;—so the notion of the limited and the finite implies the correlative one of the unlimited and the infinite. Let any one attentively examine his own inmost thoughts, and he will find that there can be no distinct idea whatever in the mind, without the implication of something else from which it is separated, and to which it is opposed. Every distinct idea must be *defined*; that is, it must be *bounded off* from other ideas, the existence of which ideas is accordingly supposed by the very fact of definition. Take the idea of *relative*, and see whether it would convey any notion to the mind whatever, unless the idea of *absolute* existed

as that to which it is opposed. What, again, were our notion of finite, without the correlative one of infinite; or what of multiplicity, without that of unity? Now, if we take the category of causality in any of the different phases under which we have presented it, we find that in every case there is a correlative and an opposed notion which we must place in what we have termed the category of *substance*; *i. e.* of the infinite and unchangeable, or of being *per se*. If, *e. g.*, we consider the world of phenomena, we are necessitated by our reason itself to suppose and admit some *substance* in which these phenomena adhere, and which remains ever essentially the same amidst all the changes that may appear on the surface. If we think of *cause*, we are unable to imagine it without admitting the existence of some *being* from which the power, variously displayed, emanates. If we think of events, we cannot conceive of them without *time*, the one immeasurable duration in which all events exist. If we think of objects as they lie in space around us, we are obliged to refer them to a universal space that envelops all the visible in its vast embrace. In all these instances the two categories penetrate each other, so that the one notion only becomes possible by the opposition with which the other throws it out before our view.

The same primary ideas, which we have deduced by the foregoing process, arise equally

before our view when we confine our attention to the subjective world, and analyse the phenomena of our own mental faculties. The mind of man is the mirror of universal nature, and whatever exists accessible to us in the whole region of being, material or spiritual, we find imaged in us with the most perfect accuracy. Man possesses a sensational faculty; and to what does this point us? Manifestly to the objective existence of an external world, the varied forms of which, by means of this faculty, are made accessible to our own minds. Man possesses, moreover, intelligence; he possesses the power of volition; he possesses impulses, desires, affections; and all these phenomena imply the existence of *a subject* to which they refer. Intelligence is *my* intelligence; it is the comprehension of things as I have classified and generalized them for my own use and convenience. Volition is *my* volition; and so also are the various desires and impulses *my own* subjective feelings, those which I myself experience, and which no one else can experience precisely in the same manner. Here, then, we find our own faculties pointing out to us by their very constitution, the existence of two realities, in the one case, that of the being I term *self*, in the other case, that of an external world which is distinguished from *self*, and opposed to it. In both cases, however, we are kept down within the region of the finite



and the relative : for neither sensation, nor understanding, nor our desires or volitions, lead us directly to the region of the absolute and eternal.

If we look a little further, however, we find that man has the faculty of perceiving absolute and necessary truth; as well as that which is relative and finite ; that there are ideas within us which come neither through the channel of the senses nor are dependent upon the peculiar constitution of our own minds, but which are the clear reflection within us of absolute and eternal realities. In the case of sensation, I perceive objects which might or might not be ; objects which may yet be changed and modified in a thousand different ways. In simple understanding, I observe relations which might or which might not exist,—relations, perhaps, which I have artificially made for my own use, and which I can as easily destroy. In every case of volition, the resolution to which I come is strictly *my own*, i.e. the fruit of my own will. But far otherwise is it with everything belonging to pure and absolute reason. Take, for instance, any axiomatic truth of pure mathematics. It is not through mere sensation that you have arrived at it ; neither is it an *arbitrary relation* of your own production ; nor is it conceived of in pursuance of any resolution of your own will. Try as you may, and you cannot alter the conceptions of pure reason even to an infinitesimal degree.

My sensations are my own, and my volitions are my own; but truth, absolute truth, is not mine nor yours, neither is it within the bounds of our possible belief, that it should be different to any rational mind from what it is to ours. Absolute truth has no element of *personality* in it, and our reason, therefore, as far as it grasps the necessary and the eternal, is strictly speaking an impersonal reason. It is the reflection within ourselves of eternal things, as they are—an emanation or ray of the infinite reason, which governs the universe by the laws of unerring wisdom and truth, and which, as far as it is manifested at all, is manifested to every mind alike.

Here, then, we are led again to the same virtual conclusion, that the three great and primary elements of all our knowledge are, firstly, the idea of our own individual existence, or of finite mind in general; secondly, the idea of nature; and, thirdly, the idea of the absolute and eternal, as manifested in the pure conceptions of our impersonal reason. Every notion of our intellectual life, we believe, may be traced to one of these sources, and we regard them, therefore, as the primitive elements of all our knowledge,—starting-points from which every true system of intellectual philosophy must take its rise. It is to the method, then, by which the different philosophical systems have grounded themselves upon these fundamental ideas, that we must now briefly revert.

SECT. V.—*Systems of Philosophy.*

A synthetical system of intellectual philosophy has for its object,—first, a complete enumeration of all the primary elements of our knowledge ; and secondly, the expansion of these simple elements into all the multiplicity of our ideas and conceptions, however varied and complicated they may appear. Philosophical systems, therefore, will differ amongst themselves, according as they hold up any one of those three fundamental ideas, which we have deduced, most prominently to our view, and make it either the *chief* or the *sole* element from which all our other ideas are derived. Systems of philosophy have accordingly ever taken three great directions, corresponding to the three fundamental ideas, upon one or other of which they have severally been founded. These three primary directions of the philosophic spirit, we must first of all elucidate, and then shew the other or secondary directions which arise from them.

The most vivid and striking facts of our consciousness are unquestionably those which we term sensations. To them the mind is sure at first to bend its attention, and as the progress of investigation goes on, it discovers an immense multitude of notions over and above our simple perceptions, the germ of which must undoubtedly be traced to the sensational faculty. Physical science, for

example, in all its branches, and every kind of knowledge indeed, that is connected with the objects of the external world, arise directly from the analysis, classification, and general investigation of those numberless materials which come through the channel of our sensations. So far the progress of what we shall term the sensational philosophy is perfectly legitimate and correct, and has given rise from time to time to splendid results. Many philosophers, however, absorbed in the multitude, the variety, and the grandeur of the fruits of physical science, have lost sight of everything else — have made the senses the sole fountains of human knowledge, and built up a whole metaphysical system upon the basis of external nature. Such, in fact, was the philosophy of the French Encyclopædists, and such *in tendency*, was the philosophy of Locke. A precisely contrary direction, on the other hand, has arisen from a too close and partial analysis of *self*. In this analysis our volitions, our desires, and the subjective laws of our reason and intelligence, were very properly and plainly separated from the whole region of sensation; but after a time, when attention became entirely concentrated upon the inherent powers of the individual mind, the external world itself was made to depend upon its subjective laws, and there resulted a whole philosophical system based upon the one notion of *self*, with its native and exhaustless

energies. Such is idealism,—true and beautiful in its results, so long as it investigates what are, properly speaking, the innate faculties of the human mind, but false and delusive when it would go a step too far, and draw from within what a more accurate philosophy shews to arise from an objective world around us. Such, in its fullest extent, was the philosophy of Berkley, in England, and of Fichte, in Germany; such in its tendency was Kantism; and such, in its first and better movement, was the system with which Dr. Reid honoured and enlightened his country.

The third element of our intellectual life remains, that, namely, which appears under the varied forms of the substantial, the eternal, the immeasurable, the infinite; in a word, the idea of being itself in which the finite mind and finite nature are both equally grounded; and accordingly, we look around now for a philosophy which answers to this fundamental notion. What, then, we inquire, must necessarily be the character of such a philosophy, when the world of phenomena is sunk in the profounder idea of substance, when the varied phases of our own consciousness are lost in the depths of Being *per se*,—when subject and object are both absorbed in one prior and eternal principle,—the Temporal lost in the Eternal, the Finite in the Infinite. This philosophy has been realized in different forms under the one idea of *Pantheism*. Such, in the ancient world, was sub-

stantially the doctrine of the Eleatics; such, in modern times, was the doctrine of Spinoza; and such in a more refined and perfect form are now the respective philosophies of Shelling and Hegel. As, however, the pantheistic scheme is properly idealistic (inasmuch as the material world is virtually denied), we may include the two latter of the three systems I have pointed out under the general term of *Idealism*; and if we wish to make a distinction between them we may term the one subjective idealism (that which absorbs everything in the subject—*The me*), and the other objective idealism, or the doctrine which reduces everything to the one infinite, unchangeable, objective substance or being, of which and in which all consist. In this way we shall have simply two main tendencies in philosophy; that of sensationalism on the one hand, and idealism on the other.

That the philosophic spirit, however, should remain content with the struggles of two opposite schools, both giving opposite conclusions, and both running into extravagant results, was a thing in its nature impossible. The contradictions thus thrown up to view naturally give rise to a critical philosophy, the object of which is to examine the grounds and pretensions of every other system, to check the progress and arraign the conclusions of dogmatism, and to get nearer the True by denying and overturning the False. The philosophy which thus aims at detecting falsehood without attempt-

ing to build up any system of truth, we term *scepticism*: not that contemptible species of scepticism which, as practised by some, is nothing more than a secret abhorrence of human reason, and a disguised misanthropy; but that which honestly aims after truth by means of exposing error wherever it may lurk. As in the case of sensationalism and idealism, therefore, so also in scepticism there is a good side and a bad; the one seeking to establish truth, by separating from it all untruth, the other seeking to lay truth as well as error alike prostrate at the foot of an obstinate and irrational unbelief. Such, then, is the natural result of the struggle between an extreme sensationalism on the one hand, and an extreme idealism on the other.

That scepticism, however, should be the culminating point of the philosophic spirit, and that the human mind should rest satisfied with the ultimate conclusion, that the highest wisdom is to doubt, were altogether inconceivable. Sceptical philosophy may be invaluable as an *instrument*, which helps us on the road to truth by dissipating fond delusions; but the mind can only repose at last in *positive*, or, as we may term them, *dogmatical* results. What, then, is the next step to which the human mind advanced after sensationalism, idealism, and scepticism had exhausted their resources and left it in doubt? The resource, we answer, in which the mind last of all takes

refuge is *Mysticism*. Reason and reflection have apparently put forth all their power, and ended in uncertainty. The mystic thereupon rises to view, and says to the rest of the philosophers around him,—Ye have all alike mistaken the road, ye have sought for truth from a totally incorrect source, and entirely overlooked the one divine element within you, from which alone it can be derived. Reason is imperfect, it halts and stumbles at every step, when it would penetrate into the deeper recesses of pure and absolute truth. But look within you; is there not a spiritual nature there, that allies you with the spiritual world; is there not an enthusiasm which arises in all its energy, when reason grows calm and silent; is there not a light that envelops all the faculties, if you will only give yourself up to your better feelings, and listen to the voice of the God that speaks and stirs within? To this source, then, the mystic looks for a knowledge that far transcends the feeble results of our reflective faculty, and in which he would lay the basis of the highest and the truest philosophy.

In mysticism, however, as well as in the other systems I have adduced there is undoubtedly a mixture of truth and error. It is quite possible amidst the cold abstractions of reason to lose sight of that inward impulse which shows itself in the flashes of genius, in the spontaneous efforts of the imagination, and in the ardent aspirations of man's religious faculty. Every part of our intellectual



life, we must remember, develops itself in its free and spontaneous, as well as it does in its conscious and reflective movements; and often the efforts of our spontaneous being have in them greater freshness and vigour than those of our calmer and more reflective. The benefit, then, which we owe to mysticism is that it recalls our attention again and again to the *spontaneous* working of our highest faculties; that it points out to us the lofty emotions to which this working often gives rise; that it withdraws us from absorbing our whole attention in logical forms and processes, and points out to us the real and veritable existence of a spiritual world with which we are all closely connected, to whose laws we are all subjected, and without which our higher reason, our instinctive faith, and our fondest aspirations would be mockery and delusion. On the other hand, mysticism is perhaps the readiest of all philosophies to fall into abuse, and to run into endless extravagances. Once let the enthusiastic element absorb the reflective, or an implicit faith be reposed in our inner sensibility, and no bounds are sufficient to mark out the delusions to which we become subject, and the wild extravagances to which the mind will resign itself. Once establish the principle that implicit credence must be given to *feeling* in its varied impulses, and every strong inward suggestion may become the whispering of some celestial spirit; every vivid idea the appearance of some vision

from another world; and the natural impulses of an energetic soul, become soon transformed into the ravings of religious fanaticism. Such is mysticism in its nature and origin, and such also both in its healthy and its deleterious results.\*

In reviewing the progress of these four philosophical tendencies, we cannot fail to make the observation, that they all owe their origin to some correct idea, and all succeed in eliciting some fragments of truth that would otherwise in all probability have been either neglected or concealed. This consideration lies at the foundation of another school of philosophy which may follow one or other of these four directions, as the case may be, to a certain extent; but which, seeing in them all only the different movements of the human reason as it progresses towards the unfolding of truth, rejects in each one that which may appear extravagant or incorrect, and builds up the residuum of truth, from whatever source derived, into a new and more complete system. Such is briefly the

\* The reader who wishes to see these four tendencies of the philosophic spirit more fully explained and proved by an appeal to the testimony of the universal history of philosophy, will find the whole question admirably treated in Victor Cousin's "*Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie*," Lectures iv. to xii. The only imperfection we would point out in his mode of treating the subject is, that he has represented the four tendencies, too much as four distinct philosophies existing in every age, rather than as so many prevailing influences or predispositions.

birth and the aim of Eclecticism ; a school of philosophy which, though modest in its pretensions, and tolerant in its tone, is singularly extensive in its researches and safe in its results.

With this brief review of the philosophical tendencies which obtain in our own age, as they have more or less in every other, we shall be better enabled to observe and to estimate their various manifestations in the last two or three centuries, and better prepared to mark generally the characteristics and tendencies of speculative philosophy in these our days.

## PART I.

### ON THE PROXIMATE SOURCES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE PROGRESS OF SENSATIONALISM FROM THE PERIOD OF BACON TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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###### SECT. I.—*Commencement of Modern Philosophy. Bacon and Hobbes.*

IN commencing our brief review of the sources, from which the Philosophy of the nineteenth century has been drawn, with the age of Bacon, we are, in fact, beginning almost at the very first dawn of the modern philosophical spirit. There are only two great eras in the history of metaphysics, the ancient and the modern; whatever attempts may seem not exactly to belong to either of these, consist only of the few steps which were necessary to aid the transition from the one to the other. The scholastic age produced nothing more than a renewal, with some peculiar modifications, of ancient philosophy. That this

was really the case, is evident from the spirit it evinced,—the objects it aimed at,—the authority to which it delighted to bow. Before any *new* philosophy could be originated, it was necessary that this whole system, which had held the minds of men for so many centuries in its grasp, should be combated, and in some measure overthrown; that the fetters, which had been imposed upon the human reason, should be gradually broken off, and freedom thus given it to breathe a more genial intellectual atmosphere. This necessity, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was practically realized and vigorously acted upon. Scholasticism (derived almost entirely from one branch of the ancient philosophy, namely, the Peripatetic) was contested during that period, with weapons derived from another and opposite school—that of the old Academy; so that the ancient contest between Aristotle and Plato, was again virtually revived upon the arena of modern history.

The whole of the period, indeed, which intervened between the crumbling of the edifice, erected by the industry of the schoolmen, and the age of Bacon, was chiefly occupied with the revival and the further modification of the most celebrated systems of the ancient world. The authority of Aristotle being undermined, and no modern school having as yet appeared, the only resource left was to return to those other masters of antiquity which

had been so long neglected, and to attempt the reconstruction of their various principles and reasonings into a fresh form, better suited to the altered cast and spirit of the age. Of all these ancient masters, Plato, of course, stood first and foremost, and whatever attempts were made either to introduce a more ideal philosophy than that of the schools, or to advance any of those numerous systems of theosophy and magic which abounded in the twilight of European civilization, ostensibly grounded themselves upon the authority of the old Academy. Some there were who, less intense in their opposition to the scholastic method, revived the Peripatetic philosophy in its ancient and original form; and even the doctrine of the Stoics made a temporary reappearance on the stage, although it played but a brief and subordinate part.

Whilst these ancient doctrines were being thus recalled from their long and silent repose, there began to appear, in conjunction with them, some few attempts at independent thinking. Peter Ramus made a bold endeavour to recast the whole art and science of logic; Telesius and Campanella to reform the study of physical science; while Francis Patritius and Jordano Bruno ventured so far as to offer to the world some new and independent theories on subjects more strictly metaphysical. All these attempts, however, were extremely indefinite. There was

no fixed point of departure from which philosophic investigation should take its rise, no settled objects at which it should aim, and no definite method according to which it should be conducted. Even astronomy itself, although it made some advances owing to the fresh stimulus then given to mathematical studies, yet was crippled in its progress for want of employing the true principles by which all physical investigations ought to be carried on. There needed some master mind who should be daring enough to trample upon the sacredness of ancient and established authority, acute enough to show the *true* objects of all philosophy, and powerful enough to furnish a new organum, and dig, as it were, a new channel, in which the philosophic spirit of the world should flow.

Two such minds arose, both of gigantic powers and almost inexhaustible resources. Each of them applied their whole strength to aid the work of reformation; and their combined influence succeeded in turning the stream of all scientific investigation into the two main directions, which it has been pursuing more or less ever since. The first of these was Lord Bacon; the next in the order, both of time and influence, was Descartes; the two together must, therefore, be regarded as forming the epoch which gave at once a final close to the ancient philosophy, and its first decided form to the new. Different as were the minds of these two great men in them-

selves, different as were their respective labours, and opposite as were, in many respects, the results at which they arrived, yet the writings of both were marked by one and the same great characteristic, namely, by the *spirit of method*. The most important works of Bacon, it will be remembered, were the "Instauratio Magna," and the "Novum organum;" those of Descartes were his "Dissertatio de Methodo," and his "Meditationes de Primâ Philosophiâ." The fruitlessness of the ancient logic, as an instrument of discovery, had been abundantly proved by past experience, and the watchword which these two great thinkers of their age both uttered, and which has been ever since the guiding principle of all philosophy, was — ANALYSIS. Bacon, who gave his attention chiefly to the direction and improvement of physical science, taught to analyse nature, while Descartes, who aimed rather at grounding all human knowledge upon its ultimate principles, instructed how to analyse *thought*. All modern philosophy, therefore, whether it arise from the Baconian or the Cartesian point of view, bears upon it the broad outline of the analytic method. It matters not whether it be the outer or the inner world to which its investigations apply, in each case it teaches us to observe and analyse *facts*, to induce instances, and upon such observation and induction to ground our knowledge of laws and principles. In this alone consists the unity of modern



science, and from this arises its broad distinction from that of the ancient world. Every natural philosopher since Bacon has grounded his success upon an induction of the facts of the outward world, and every metaphysician, since Descartes, has progressed onwards in his department of knowledge by analysing the facts of our inward consciousness.

It might, perhaps, be supposed that this unity of method ought to have given similar results, but this was far from being the case. Bacon, by concentrating his chief attention upon nature, and applying his new method or organum mainly to its interpretation, gave to his philosophy an empirical tendency, that sought rather to interpret the phenomena of mind by a reference to the impressions of sense, than by an explication of the conceptions of our reason: in a word, he laid the foundation of the modern sensationalism. Descartes, looking more deeply beneath the phenomenal world, and with an intense power of reflection, gazing upon the mind itself as the instrument and medium by which all truth is perceived, gave rise to the rationalistic method of philosophising, and thus laid the basis of the modern idealism. The great question which both sought to investigate, was that of the true ground and source of human knowledge; they both alike aimed at bringing system and unity into the varied and disjointed learning of their age; they both

pointed out a "prima philosophia" from which all science must take its rise; but, with the same objects in view, they differed widely in their conclusions. The English philosopher regarded experience as the ultimate basis on which the superstructure of our knowledge must rest, while the French reformer traced it all back to those innate ideas and principles which, he affirmed, we have prior to, and independent of, any experience whatever. In a future chapter we shall follow the results of Cartesianism to the nineteenth century; our present object is, to trace Bacon's experimental philosophy down to the same period, so far as it has borne upon what are more strictly called metaphysical investigations.

And, first, we may remark that the influence of Bacon upon the progress of *speculative* philosophy was for the most part *indirect*. A few pages, comparatively, would suffice to contain everything he wrote of a strictly metaphysical character. The *spirit* of his whole philosophy, however, was such as could not fail to leave an indelible impression upon every subject lying within the range of human research. In his early life, Bacon had studied the Aristotelian philosophy as it was then taught in the "schools;" from them he emerged into the toils of active duty, and devoted the extraordinary powers with which he was endowed to the service of his country in the department of

law and government. A life thus spent could not but give a strong practical turn to his mind, and suggest to it a philosophy very different from that which would have resulted from so many years of calm and solitary study. When, therefore, he was led, by circumstances too well known, to withdraw himself from public life and devote himself again to philosophical labours, it was almost inevitable that his thoughts should flow in a peculiar direction—that, namely, which was imparted to them, on the one side by his keen observation of the practical uselessness of the scholastic philosophy, and on the other by his long experience in the wants of a mind that is to take an active part in the realities of human life. He saw that, in ordinary cases, the keenest logic could not supply the place of observation and experience; and carrying out this principle generally to the whole department of philosophy, he came to the conclusion, that pure scientific knowledge, as well as all other, must take its start from an induction of facts.

Had Bacon, however, stopped here, he would have accomplished little or nothing beyond what others had done before him. From Aristotle downwards, the importance of observing facts was clearly enough acknowledged; but herein consists the originality of the Baconian view, — that whilst others had simply collected *particular* facts, and from these had been ac-

customed at once to construct their theories and deduce general laws, Bacon saw that we must ascend gradually and cautiously through the several stages of generalization until the highest point be attained. “*Duæ viæ sunt,*” such are his own words, “*atque esse possunt ad inquirendam et inveniendam veritatem. Altera a sensu et particularibus advolat ad axiomata maximè generalia, atque ex iis principiis eorumque immota veritate judicat, et invenit axiomata media; atque hæc via in usu est. Altera à sensu et particularibus excitat axiomata ascendendo continentèr et gradatim, ut ultimo loco perveniatur ad maximè generalia: quæ via vera est sed intentata.*” In pointing out these “*axiomata media,*” Bacon unfolded the secret of all the success which has attended modern physical investigations. Had he seen that they might in many instances be obtained by reasoning downwards from general principles, which had been previously arrived at, as it were, *per saltum*, and then cautiously tested by an appeal to facts, as well as by the slower process of reasoning upwards step by step, he would have left nothing to be desired with regard to the method of physical research.

Now, the spirit of the Baconian or inductive method manifestly points out two movements in the march of philosophy. The first movement is the *observation of facts*; and by this observation is intended not merely noticing and marking

down those that may spontaneously offer themselves to our view, but likewise the instituting of experiments—the *search* for facts, or, as he himself terms it, the “dissection and anatomy of the world.” This “*interrogation of nature*” is, in fact, that which we should now more properly term *analysis*. The second movement included in the Baconian induction is that by which these particular facts, when they have been well observed and authenticated, are bound together by some distinct conception or combined into a general law or principle. This process is that which, in the language of the present day, we should term *synthesis*. To Bacon, therefore, we must attribute the honour of having sketched out the true order of philosophical research, and foreseen the splendid results which its application has educed in the increase of all the comforts and facilities of human life, as well as in the general progression afforded by it to the intellectual culture of mankind. It was under the deep impression of the truth and importance of these views that he announced them as the “great instauration” which was to introduce a new era into the intellectual history of the world.

The *method* of Bacon, as we have thus described it, is equally applicable to every department of human knowledge; it is just as successful in the advancement of moral and metaphysical truth as it is in aiding the progress of physical science. Its author, however, in his ardour for improving the latter, and in

his yearning to see the results of his principles impressed upon every feature of practical life, shrank from applying them with the same boldness to the world within as he did to the world without. Had he been true to his own system he would have seen, that the torch which he had kindled would have thrown as much light into the labyrinths of the scholastic metaphysics as it did into the mazes amidst which natural science, for 2000 years, had been losing its way ; but from this application of it he was deterred, either from a *mistaken* deference to revelation, or from the fact, which has not unfrequently been realized, that those who have bent their energies upon the creation or discovery of any great principle commonly leave it to others to develop its results and reap its fruits. Certain it is that Bacon not only failed to recommend, but even distrusted, his own method when applied generally to mental philosophy. " I hold," he remarks in his *Advancement of Learning*, " that this knowledge must, in the end, be bounded by religion, else it will be subject to deceit and delusion ;" and again, still more explicitly, he remarks, "*Mens humana si agat in materiam, naturam rerum ac opera Dei contemplando, pro modo naturæ operatur, atque ab eâdem determinatur ; si ipsa in se vertitur, tanquam aranea texens telam, tum demum indeterminata est, et parit telas quasdam doctrinæ, tenuitate fili, operisque mirabiles, sed quoad usum frivolas et inanes.*" Had he sought to break through

the thin webs of the scholastic sophistry in this, as he did in so many other points, he might have proved here also not like the spider but like the silkworm that weaves from within a web of excellent utility and of marvellous beauty.

Whilst, however, it is necessary to point out Bacon's timidity in approaching the region of speculative philosophy, yet we should be far from asserting that his mind was really so objective in its tendency as many have represented. The great want of the age in which he lived was a knowledge of facts, and therefore it was to this point that he chiefly directed his attention; but it would be wrong to assert that the great founder of modern philosophy was ignorant of the truth that there is an ideal or subjective element in human knowledge as well as a sensational or objective; that if we have to collect facts on the one hand, we must gain clear conceptions on the other; and that valid progress can only be made by the right application of the one to the other. He appears, indeed, to have meditated a work in which those abstract notions which are necessary for the advancement of science should be properly and fully explained; and had he lived to complete it, it is likely that it would have counteracted the sensational tendency of his other philosophy. It cannot be denied, however, that the natural tendency of Bacon's writings *as they now stand*, is to give an undue preponderance to the objective element, and to superinduce a neglect

of those more abstract conceptions upon the right appreciation of which the progress of science greatly depends.

One false or imperfect step in the application of a great principle will generally lead the way for another. The Baconian method, applied as we have seen almost exclusively to the world of external nature, soon began to lean to the side of analysis rather than synthesis; it aimed at noting down and comparing the multiplicity of surrounding phenomena rather than attempting to generalize the various branches of human knowledge, and to seek for the primary grounds or conceptions on which they must all rest. Hence, the influence which Bacon exerted upon his age was such as would inevitably lead to the excessive cultivation of physical science, and if it did not altogether discourage metaphysical philosophy, yet it naturally pointed out the experimental or sensational school as the only one that could rest upon a sure foundation, or bring forth any valuable results.

The field, then, was now fairly open. The human reason had, in the person of Bacon, asserted its independence of all former authority; the search after the foundations of truth was commenced by a master mind; the tendency was already given to reject all previous efforts, and to fall back upon the experience of our senses as the ultimate basis of the whole. It was not the intention of Bacon, indeed, to exclude all *à priori*



conceptions, nor would he have sanctioned the consequences which were soon drawn from his decided leaning to The objective; but the real bearing of his writings *as applied to mental and moral philosophy* was soon rendered apparent in the works of one of his warmest friends and followers. Hobbes, who had drunk deeply into the spirit of his master, began to philosophize just where *he* had left off. The master himself, looking far into the distance, occupied his whole genius in framing the *method* of future research. Many, indeed, were soon found to carry out this method in the department of physics to the most splendid results, but Hobbes was the only pupil who began by applying it in its most empirical character to metaphysics, morals, and politics.

The main features of the philosophy of Hobbes may be sketched out in a very few words. Bacon { had intimated that all our definite knowledge must lie within the limits of our sensible experience. Hobbes proceeded to generalize and explain this Baconian principle in such a manner, that he made sensation to be not only the sole source of our knowledge, but likewise the sole test of reality. As, therefore, we can perceive through sensation only what is *material*, he concluded that matter is the only reality, and that whatever exists accordingly must be a part of the material universe. The whole of philosophy was thus reduced to the *doctrine of bodies*, beyond which, he main-

tains, there can be no kind of knowledge whatever. Our senses, however, give us intimation not only of the *existence* of bodies, but of their *changes*; of all which changes the ultimate principle is motion. The doctrine of bodies thus includes the knowledge of all phenomena in relation to their probable causes; and of all possible causes as known from their observed effects. Such, according to Hobbes, is the proper province and the sole aim of true philosophy.

But now comes the chief peculiarity of his division. Bodies, he says, are divided into two kinds, *natural* bodies and *political* bodies. The former include not only the whole of what we term external nature, but likewise those existences which we variously call mind, soul, or spirit. This first division of philosophy, therefore, is so explained as to include four heads: physics; ontology; logic; and metaphysics.

In *physics*, Hobbes followed his illustrious predecessor, inculcating generally the necessity of observation or analysis, and manifesting with it a strong preference for the atomistic doctrine, which he probably owed to his intimacy with Gassendi. The path of experimental philosophy, however, was not the one in which he delighted to walk, and he even ridiculed the Royal Society of London for confining their attention so much to minute experiments. With regard to *ontology*, he affirms that we can never attain to the simple; that the

compound is the ground of all our knowledge ; that the finite only can be conceived of by the human mind, and that the infinite is an expression invented simply to honour a being the existence of whom rests upon faith alone. As to *logic*, he maintains that to think is nothing more than to perform a calculation, since it can consist simply in adding and subtracting our various sensations ; that words are merely the signs by which this calculation is carried on ; and that truth and falsehood are nothing more than the agreement or disagreement of words amongst themselves. Then, lastly, with regard to *metaphysics*, he held that the soul is itself material, that all its feelings or sensations arise from the motion of its material particles, and that consequently, all the phenomena of consciousness are the direct results of organization.

The second division of philosophy which treats of political bodies, includes general ethics and political economy. The ethics of Hobbes are precisely what we should expect to flow from his sensational principles in metaphysics. If every thought is in fact nothing more than a compound of sensations, the ideas of good and evil can be nothing more than expressions for pleasure and pain, that is, for agreeable or disagreeable sensations ; and all ethics, therefore, must consist in rules for the avoidance of the one and the attainment of the other. Moreover, as it does not depend

upon ourselves to determine what feelings shall be pleasurable and what painful, it follows that our desires or volitions must be absolutely determined by motives from without, and that man must, therefore, be the absolute creature of necessity. The law of nature, in accordance with these principles, will dictate to every man to secure for himself all the means of physical enjoyment he is able, at whatever expense to his fellow man ; and, consequently, the original or natural condition of mankind must be a condition of warfare, in which every man's hand is against his brother and his brother's against him. Experience, however, shows that a state of war is a state of suffering to the majority ; hence the origin of law, government, and social institutions, which are simply antagonists to man's natural selfishness, and best answer their end when they are most strong to control the power of the individual. Hence, an absolute despotism is the very perfection of human government.

Such, briefly, was the superstructure, metaphysical, moral, and political which Hobbes built up with great ingenuity and ability upon the Baconian principles. Far would Bacon have been from following his pupil in these conclusions, but it can hardly be disputed that the germ of them was to be found in the empirical tendency which runs more or less through the whole of his philosophy.

The genius which Hobbes manifested both in his style of writing, and in the severe logic by which he built up his whole system from its ground-principles to its completion no one has ever denied. Whilst, however, great ability was displayed in ALL his writings, the chief strength of his mind was evidently concentrated in his moral and political works, which, as they gained most celebrity, raised also the greatest opposition. The metaphysics of Hobbes, indeed, could, by no means, be considered brilliant efforts of genius, nor could they possibly serve as a basis upon which any deeply thinking mind would rest in its search after the fundamental principles of human nature. If this was the case with Hobbes, assuredly the writings of Gassendi (who now became extremely popular on the continent of Europe, and belonged to the same materialistic school) could not be considered as at all capable of supplying the defect. In fact, the *metaphysician* of the Baconian philosophy was yet to appear before the analytic method could be said to be strictly and successfully applied to the science of the human mind.

It was just at this time, while there was a perpetual conflict of opinions going on between the school of Hobbes on the one side, and those who, like Cumberland, were seeking to lay an immovable foundation for morality and religion on the other, that a company of scholars within the Uni-

versity of Oxford were assembled by chance at the chambers of *John Locke*. Finding themselves perplexed and baffled in their discussions, it occurred to Locke that they were taking the wrong road to arrive at truth; that the first thing to be done was not to analyze things themselves, or doctrines themselves to their simplest or their most abstract forms, but to investigate the faculties of the human mind in order to see what objects lie within its reach, and what are beyond it. From that day is dated the commencement of a work which was destined to exert a greater influence upon metaphysical science than any which had appeared since the age of Aristotle and Plato, I mean the "Essay on the Human Understanding." We must proceed, therefore, to investigate succinctly, but as clearly as possible, the real tendency of this immortal work, and to estimate the effect it produced upon the progress of speculative philosophy.

## SECTION II.—*Criticism of Locke.*

First of all, it is abundantly evident that Locke is to be placed amongst those independent thinkers, who, instead of grounding their opinions upon any previous authority, determine rather to set aside all former efforts, and seek anew for themselves a solid foundation for human knowledge. In so doing he was evidently following, and that boldly,

in the track which had been previously opened by the illustrious Bacon. This attempt at independent thinking might evidently have been commenced in many different ways, and by the path at first struck out, would be mainly determined the method of the whole subsequent investigation.

As to the plan which Locke proposed to follow, we are not left in doubt for a single moment; it is clear and decisive from the first page, and indeed is made manifest in the very circumstances which gave rise to his "Essay." He affirms in the very outset that it is of no use to search deeply into any subject, with the hope of attaining ultimate truth, before we have estimated aright the *instrument* we have to employ, that is, to use his own words, "before we have found out the powers of the understanding, the extent to which they reach, and the points in which they fail." It is impossible to indicate more clearly than this his fixed opinion, that the foundation of all philosophy must be found in *Psychology*, and that the starting point must ever be an accurate observation and analysis of the facts or phenomena of our own consciousness. Here we see at once that Locke had imbibed not only Bacon's independence, but also the spirit of the Baconian method; that he both avoided and despised (as he tells us in almost the first paragraph) the fruitless speculations of former philosophers to ascertain such things as "the essence of the mind," or "by what motions

of our spirits, or changes in our bodies, we experience sensations," or to solve any similar question, the evidence of which does not come directly within the range of our own consciousness; but that, on the contrary, he considered the study of mind as well as of matter to have reference simply to such actual phenomena as can be observed, classified, and then correctly reasoned upon.

But then arose the enquiry, Can we observe the phenomena of mind as surely as we do those of the material world, and can we equally regard them as real objects of science? That we can make observations upon the facts of our inward life he saw must be evident to every reflecting mind; for what do we mean when we speak of consciousness except that there is something or other passing within us of which we are conscious? Everything, therefore, that passes through the mind, of whatever nature it be, may be regarded as a legitimate object of mental philosophy, it is *a phenomenon*, and as such may be set down upon our roll as a real and unquestionable fact, equally valid with those of any other science.

Locke takes it for granted, accordingly, as a thing resting on the direct evidence of our consciousness, that man *has* an understanding, that if his consciousness assures him of anything, it assures him that he does think, and, if he think, that there must be something within which is the immediate object of his thought. Such object, whatever it



be, he terms an *idea*, which is, accordingly defined to be, "Anything with which our minds are immediately occupied when we think." Thus the whole science of the human understanding, or, as it may be otherwise expressed, the whole search after the true principles of human knowledge, is reduced simply to the *study of ideas*.

This study he proposes to prosecute in a three-fold manner. He proposes, first, to investigate the *origin* of our ideas, and the means by which we acquire them; that being done, he offers, secondly, to show what knowledge we possess by means of our ideas, and to determine its certainty, evidence, and extent; and then, as there are objects in the mind which we cannot call objects of knowledge, but the reality of which rests solely upon opinion or faith, he proposes, thirdly, to examine the grounds and the degrees of our assent in matters of this nature.

Now, what does this sketch (which Locke gives us in his introduction) of the course he intended to follow in the work at large indicate? It shows us most clearly his full conviction, that the *phenomena* of the mind itself must be our first study; and that the ideas we may be found to possess within our consciousness must be thoroughly probed and traced to their very origin, before we raise any inquiry as to their certainty, their validity, or their accurate correspondence with any external object to which we may suppose

them to answer. In a word, it shows us that he held the great principle, that both logic and ontology are out of place, until we have laid a foundation for them in *psychology*. When we have once learned to appreciate the true nature of our faculties, and have observed and classified all the inward phenomena of our consciousness, then, first, we may begin to mark out, in order, the abstract forms which our thoughts and reasonings assume,—that is, to create a science of formal logic; and then, first, also, may we begin to inquire how far these subjective ideas are the signs and proofs of objective existences,—that is, to seek for the ground-principles of ontology. So far Locke was true to his proposed method, so far he applied admirably the Baconian system to the study of the human mind, and bid fair to build up a superstructure of metaphysical philosophy upon a fixed and immoveable basis.

Now, in order to point out where, and in what manner, Locke departed from the principles which he at first laid down for his guidance, let us for a moment consider what the *new organum* of philosophy, as derived from Bacon and employed by Locke himself, really is. It contains, as we have shown, two movements; first, the observation of phenomena just as nature gives them; and then the explication and recomposition of them, in such a manner, as to bring to view *general laws*. Now fidelity to these principles imperatively demanded

of Locke, when he applied them to the subject of his essay, to commence by a thorough induction of *all* the phenomena of the human understanding, as they are given to us in our own consciousness; having done this, he might safely have proceeded, either to classify them, or to draw any conclusions that seemed warranted. But what plan does he actually pursue? Instead of commencing by such a careful induction of facts, he makes in the outset no induction at all; he determines neither the number nor the characteristics of our ideas, but starts at once by searching for their origin. This was the point in which he first of all departed from the true method of philosophising, and which led him on many occasions, as we shall soon see, into no little inaccuracy and confusion.

There is not, in fact, a single branch of inductive science in the world, which would give correct results, if pursued in the same manner as Locke pursued the study of mind. Suppose, for example, that the illustrious astronomer of the same age, had investigated the architecture of the heavens on the same principle as Locke did the construction and powers of the human understanding; suppose that, instead of commencing by a diligent induction of the phenomena of the heavens, he had first applied all his energies to search into the *origin* of those few, which presented themselves confusedly and in the aggregate to his mind,—what, we ask, would have been the result? He

must, in that case, necessarily have formed hypotheses unwarranted, or, at least, unproved by facts ; and, instead of casting a lustre upon his name, his age, and his country, would have, probably, taken his rank amongst those ingenious speculators, who had before him beaten the path to oblivion. The method which Newton followed taught him, before he sought the origin of any phenomena, to examine what they really were, what characteristics they bore, and how many of a similar nature might be ranged side by side to throw light upon each other. He knew that, to neglect *one* fact, or to imagine *one*, were both fatal errors in inductive science, which might lead us in the end far away from the truth.

Precisely of this nature, however, was Locke's first deviation from the true Baconian principles. In commencing by seeking for the *origin* of our ideas, he was actually investigating the source of phenomena, of which he had not yet determined either the character or the number. The result was that his conclusion upon this question was necessarily *a guess* ; or, if we would name it philosophically, an hypothesis which *might* be true or might not. Instead of classifying all our ideas as they exist in their present mature condition in the mind, and then drawing from such an extensive and complete view of the case, a valid conclusion as to their primitive state or origin, he drew his inference before he had examined his data, and thus made his observations square to his

theory, instead of drawing his theory from the observations. To lay a firm basis for mental science by such a method, was and ever must be absolutely impossible; for, when once we have an hypothesis ready formed, we soon become too prejudiced in its favour to judge impartially of any facts, which may seem to militate against it; and, even, if all the facts we may happen to observe do agree with it, yet, until we have made a systematic induction of them *all*, and brought them one by one to the proper test, it is impossible to regard our position as proved beyond the danger of being overturned by some hitherto unheeded phenomenon. But it is not an *uncertain* position which will do for the corner stone of a whole system of philosophy.

Having thus pointed out the error which Locke appears at the outset to have fallen into in the method of conducting his examination, we may now proceed to a criticism of the different portions of his work, and shew in what manner this first aberration led him into subsequent confusion. As, however, the whole of the former part of the "Essay" is occupied in discussing the question of the origin of our ideas, we must make a few remarks on this expression, to pave the way for a better comprehension of Locke's whole theory. The term *origin* may be taken in two senses, essentially different from each other. It may mean the *cause* of anything being produced,

or it may imply simply the occasion of its production. Between the real cause and the occasion of any phenomenon there is a wide diversity. The one implies the *producing power*, the other only some *condition* upon which this power comes into exercise. If I cast a grain of corn into the earth, the occasion of its springing up and producing plant, ear, and grain, is the warmth and moisture of the soil in which it is buried; but this is by no means the cause. The cause lies in the mysterious vital power which the seed contains within itself; the other is but the condition upon which this cause produces the effect. I am aware that a sensationalist who rejects the idea of power would repudiate this distinction, and regard all such effects as that above described, as being brought about by a composition of causes. We still maintain, however, that in the majority of instances, there is a valid ground for the distinction, and that the power by which an event is brought into being is clearly separable from the conditions under which that power is put forth. When we speak, therefore, of the origin of our ideas, we must ever take heed to avoid the ambiguity which lurks in the term. The cause of any idea is the inward faculty from which it *immediately* takes its rise; and this is in the proper, and in the only proper sense, its true origin. But man, we know, is a unity; the different powers and faculties of his mind all coexist in one subject, and develope them-

selves simultaneously, working and interworking together throughout all their operations. It so happens, therefore, that the action of one faculty often depends upon another, and only comes into play when thus stimulated. Hence the ideas which owe their origin, properly so called, to one of these faculties, may owe their occasion to another; in which case great care is requisite to separate that faculty which gives rise to them *directly*, from those which have to do only indirectly with their production. Thus, to give an example, we should attribute the abstract conception of space directly to the operation of our reason; while yet we regard sensation, or an actual contact with the material world, as absolutely necessary in order to incite the rational faculty to the formation of such a conception.

Now, this obvious distinction Locke appears to have entirely overlooked. Where he found a difficulty in shewing the direct dependence of any idea upon experience, he soon discovered the means of shewing its indirect dependence upon it, and having done this, he incorrectly concluded that the whole of our knowledge could be derived from this one source. We owe it mainly to Kant, that this fallacy has been thoroughly probed and refuted. In the very first paragraph of his great work ("The Critic of Pure Reason") he points us to experience as the *occasion* of every possible conception, which the mind forms; but proves

afterwards most convincingly, that the true cause of many of our conceptions is to be found solely in the original constitution of the understanding or of the reason. This distinction, then, premised, we may proceed to consider the sentiments which are advanced in the first book of the "Essay on the Human Understanding."

Before Locke proceeded to the analysis of *ideas*, properly so called, there was a prior question which seemed to claim some consideration, namely, whether those first principles, or axioms, which are universally granted, which are regarded as undemonstrable, and from which all reasoning originally proceeds, are not to be considered as strictly *innate*. Should these first truths really turn out to be so, it is clear that they would seriously militate against Locke's whole theory; and therefore it was necessary to clear them out of the way, before he proceeded to prove generally the empirical origin of our ideas. And what course does he take to accomplish this purpose? He adduces a number of these first truths *in their abstract axiomatic form*, and then undertakes to prove with considerable success, that they are neither universally held nor even universally comprehended. Since, however, he had not only to disprove their universality as elements of human knowledge, but was bound also to account for their origin on some positive principle, here arose a formidable difficulty, which he was obliged to



encounter. To make absolute and self-evident propositions, such *e.g.* as that a whole is greater than a part, or that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be, merely experimental in their nature, appeared absurd; at any rate to shew the method by which they could come simply through the aid of experience, was, in the highest degree, difficult; the only resource left { was to take shelter behind a species of nominalism, and to declare all such propositions to be *verbal* abstractions, which might be employed for convenience, but which could be of no utility in aiding the discovery of any truth. "These verbal maxims," he says, "are only of use in disputes, to stop the mouths of wranglers, but not of much use to the discovery of unknown truths, or to help forward the mind in its search after knowledge. Several general maxims are no more than bare verbal propositions, and teach us nothing but the respect and import of names one to another."

Now, in this theory of maxims, or first principles, whether speculative or practical, there is a manifest misapprehension of their real force and character, which we may shew both from the arguments by which he attempts to prove their non-universality, and also from the considerations by which he endeavours to prove their practical inutility. In taking up the first or negative argument, Locke selects, as we have seen, some examples, and lays them before us in a definite verbal form; then

having shewn that such axioms would be unintelligible to a child or a savage, he infers that they are not innate, nay, that their very terms themselves have to be empirically acquired before they can be duly appreciated. No doubt this is perfectly correct on the supposition, that a first truth necessarily means something expressed or conceived in formal, logical language. In this sense there can be no maxim innate, because in *nature* there are given neither propositions ready formed, nor even words by which we may form them. But while no principle is implanted in us by nature, in its complete logical form, yet there may be many virtually implied and included in the necessary laws by which our judgments are governed, and our thoughts develope themselves. Ask a savage whether every effect must have a sufficient cause, and he would smile unintelligently at the question; and yet that untutored mind is so constructed, that it acts necessarily upon the very principle which, clothed in an artificial and verbal dress, it was unable to comprehend. Ask a child whether a whole is greater than a part, or whether the same thing can at the same time be and not be, and, as Locke truly says, he would not very likely comprehend the very terms of the question; but let him be brought into a position in which he has to pass such a judgment *in its concrete form*, and you find that his mind comprehends the full force of the axiom, and acts upon it as necessarily

as we do. Certain, then, as it may be, that these first truths are unintelligible to the infant or untutored mind, yet, strip them of their abstract dress, and you will find that every mind contains, in its primitive judgments, nay, possesses, as the very law of its activity, the germ of these very axioms which the more cultivated intellect learns but to develop and to express.

Again, with regard to the other ground which Locke takes up, when he denies the real value of axioms, and affirms them to be of no avail in our search after knowledge; here, also, there is the same misapprehension of their real nature. That we are unable to draw truth *directly* from such first principles we allow; but that is far from proving them to be worthless. So far, indeed, from that, it may be easily seen that they lie at the very foundation of all our reasoning, so that without their existence *in the mind* no argument would be possible. Locke affirms, in opposition to this, that mathematicians, who make the most use of axioms, employ them more for convenience or custom than utility; and we are quite ready to grant that they do so, as far as the *verbal expression* of them goes. But let any one try to reason one single step without having them in the mind, and taking their truth for granted, and it will soon be seen that they are the necessary condition of every demonstration {that we employ. *Nature gives us nothing in the abstract*, and therefore, in this sense, neither

axioms nor ideas can be innate; but she gives us }  
 that mental constitution, and impresses upon us }  
 those laws of thought, which necessarily involve  
 such first axiomatic truths, and which lead every  
 mind to form them inwardly for itself as soon as it  
 comes into contact with the world without. Our  
 conclusion, then, respecting the whole question of  
 first principles, speculative and practical, is this,  
 that although in their abstract form they are not  
 innate, yet that there are *innate faculties*, or laws of  
 thought which, when put into action by experience,  
 necessarily give rise to them as primitive judgments;  
 and that these judgments, at first applied in the  
 concrete, at length, by a process of abstraction,  
 assume a perfect axiomatic form. Experience  
 accordingly, is the *occasion* of their production,  
 but their *real cause* or origin is to be found in the  
 native energy of the human mind.

The doctrine of first principles being disposed  
 of in the first book of his Essay, Locke proceeds in  
 the second to develope his theory respecting the  
 origin of *our ideas*. The supposition of our ideas  
 being innate, he rejects primarily on this ground,  
 that if it can be shewn (which he believes to be  
 quite possible) that we have faculties capable of  
 forming them, there is no reason to regard them  
 as originally implanted. So far Locke is un-  
 doubtedly correct, and has shewn satisfactorily that  
 our natural faculties are sufficient to account for  
 every notion we possess, without our having re-

course to the fiction of innate ideas. But then mark the process of reasoning which he institutes from this point. Let it be allowed, that every idea is the result of our natural faculties; from what, then, he asks, does the action of these faculties take its rise? Manifestly from experience. Therefore, he concludes, experience must be the primary source of all our ideas. This it was which laid the foundation for the celebrated sentence in which Locke compares the mind to white paper which is void of all characters, until the hand of experience inscribe them. Now here, again, we may observe the error into which Locke was led by confounding the *cause* of our ideas with their *occasion*. There can be no idea, he argues, prior to experience;—granted. *Therefore*, he concludes, the mind previous to it is, as it were, a “*Tabula rasa*,” owing every notion, which it gains, primarily to an empirical source. Granted still,—if all that is meant be simply, that experience is the *occasion* or *condition* of our acquiring our ideas; but if it be intended that this is in every case their proper origin, we at once demur. The mind comes into existence, if indeed void of actual ideas, yet by no means empty of powers, instincts, tendencies, and what we may term intellectual laws and principles; and it is to these that we attribute the direct *origin* of all the pure conceptions of reason, although it might have been experience which *occasioned* the formation of them. The spirit of man, just

like the seed, to which I before referred, has its inherent energy within itself. The grain of wheat has in it, *potentially*, the ear that is to wave in the next summer's sun, and the acorn, in its little circumference, encloses the oak that is to bear the blast of ages; in the same manner does the mind at birth contain potentially all the elements of the future man, neither more nor less. But as the seed must come in contact with the soil, to call its hidden powers into development, so must the mind come into contact with the world of experience, in order that its energies may unfold themselves, and produce their own proper fruits.

Having broadly laid down the principle, that all the materials of our knowledge come from experience, Locke goes on to explain his theory more particularly. Observation, he shews, may be external or internal, that is, it may have reference to the visible world, or to our own mental operations. The former kind of observation is called *sensation*, the latter *reflection*. These two, then, sensation and reflection, are the sources of all our ideas, and it was for the sake of proving and illustrating this position that the greater portion (that is the second book) of the "Essay" was written. Now, in estimating this theory of the origin of our ideas, it is of great importance to know exactly what is included in the two terms sensation and reflection, and to attribute to them neither more nor less than the author intended.

With regard to the first, we can have but little difficulty in perceiving that he included under it simply that state of passive receptivity in which the mind exists, when brought, by means of the senses, into contact with the material world. In making reflection a source of ideas co-ordinate with sensation, he renders quite obvious the distinction between the *passive* and the *active* faculties of man, and clearly avoids the extreme into which so many of his followers have run, in regarding sensation as the foundation principle of all our mental operations. If, then, there be any doubt at all in determining the precise meaning of the theory now before us, it must all rest in the acceptance of the term *reflection*. The question to be decided is this,—Does Locke intend that by means of reflection we can gain any actual materials of knowledge distinct from the intimations of our senses, or that the use of it is simply to *combine* and *compare* the materials which the senses primarily afford us. If he mean the former, then he admits that there are two distinct and *original* sources of knowledge; if the latter, then he allows but one real inlet for our ideas, although reflection may give us the means of extensively modifying and combining them. A careful perusal of the first few chapters of the second book, is, I think, quite sufficient to convince us, that the latter of these opinions was the one which Locke decidedly entertained.

That sensation is the *first* developed of these

two sources, he again and again asserts in such passages as the following,—“I see no reason to believe that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas;” and again more clearly, “The mind first employs itself about the impressions made on the senses:” and in many other passages assertions of a similar nature are made. To determine, however, more accurately the exact province of reflection (*i. e.*, of the mind’s observation of its own operations), in the acquisition of our ideas, Locke gives us an analysis of what these inward operations really are. The first is *perception*, which he uses to express merely the consciousness of our sensations. As, therefore, perception is expressly said to be *passive*, and is only occupied with our sensations, it cannot add any fresh material to our knowledge. The next chapter treats of *retention*, which is the same as memory, and which we see, at once, can only occupy itself with ideas already in the mind. The third operation is *discernment*, which expresses simply the separation of our ideas. The fourth is *comparison*; the fifth, *composition*; and the sixth and last, *abstraction*; all which do nothing more than either combine several ideas together, or isolate some general property belonging to them and contemplate it by itself. These are the mental operations, to discern which is the province of reflection; and it is clear from the whole account, that the different faculties, thus enumerated,



are made to hold a place quite subordinate to sensation ; that they operate only upon the material afforded by it ; and that, in fine, there is only one real inlet to our ideas, that, namely, which is the inlet to all the impressions of the material world.

To propound a theory is always an easy task ; to sustain it is altogether a different thing. Locke's main difficulty was now to come, that is, to shew how every idea, of whatever nature, could enter the mind through the two media which he had pointed out. For this purpose he selects those ideas, which appear *least* dependent upon sensation, and had usually been considered as innate ; and enters into many long and acute processes of reasoning, in order to bring them within the limits of experience. These ideas, to take them as near as possible in the order in which he has discussed them, are those of space, of time, of infinity, of causality, of personal identity, of substance, and lastly, of good and evil. To enter into the discussion of these ideas separately, would lead us far beyond our present prescribed limits, and we must, therefore, endeavour to point out, as clearly as we are able, the *fundamental error*, which runs through the whole. This is, in fact, no other than that, which we have before pointed out, namely, the confounding of the cause with the occasion. Victor Cousin significantly terms the true origin of an idea, the *logical* condition of its existence, while the occasion of it he calls the *chronological*

condition. In seeking, for example, the logical order of any two ideas, we attempt to determine which one *rationally* includes the other. In seeking the chronological order, we attempt to determine which one the mind actually *becomes first conscious of*. If, according to the former method, we seek to deduce our notions in a logical series one from another, we shall find that all the abstract ideas, which I have mentioned above, are the first links in the several chains of subordinate ideas which are dependent upon them; but if, according to the latter method, we simply ask, what is the order *in time* according to which these notions actually arose within us, then we shall find that the date of our first experience, is the date also of our first conceptions. Let us take, as an example, the idea of *space*, and the idea of *matter*. Which one, we ask, is dependent upon the other? *Logically*, the notion of body must evidently depend upon that of space; for you can conceive of the existence of no single body, and no aggregate of bodies without placing them in space, while you can easily conceive of space denuded of all matter. On the other hand, in the *chronological* order, the idea of body would stand, at least, contemporary with that of space, since it is our first contact with body, which occasions our reason to form for itself the absolute notion of space, as that in which all matter must exist. The want of this distinction, or rather the total neglect of the logical depen-

dence of our ideas, one upon the other, is the fundamental error pervading the whole attempt which Locke makes to give to our pure and absolute conceptions an empirical origin.

To maintain his theory satisfactorily, Locke is constrained so to distort these conceptions, as often to become inconsistent with himself. Absolute *space* he confounds, for instance, in one place, with the universe; and then, in another place, he clearly distinguishes the two, but makes the former a mere mental abstraction. *Time*, again, he confounds with the succession of our thoughts;—that is, he makes duration identical with that which is merely the measure of it. *Infinity* he regards as a mere negation; and as to *personal identity*, it consists, according to Locke, entirely in our consciousness; so that if our consciousness ceases, we, of course, must cease to be the same persons that we were before; nay, it becomes very uncertain, whether we rise in the morning the same persons that we were when we retired to rest the previous night. The idea of *causation*, moreover, being expressly confined by him within the limits of our sensations, can, in this case, be really nothing more than the universal precedence and subsequence of phenomena. The distinct idea of *substance* is again and again denied, except it be a kind of confused cluster of sensations; while the notions of *good* and *evil* are made to be the result, instead of being, as they

are in fact, the foundation of our ideas of reward and punishment. In all these cases, thus briefly presented, there is the same error committed in principle, because in every instance the absolute idea is represented as derivable from those allied sensations, which *may*, indeed, be their occasion, but which can never have been their logical cause or origin.

With regard to the true origin of these ideas, we should come to the same conclusion as we did in the case of first principles; namely, that they cannot be strictly speaking *innate*, inasmuch as nothing is given by nature in its abstract form. The original operations of the human reason are its *primitive judgments*. These judgments, at first, particular or concrete, are generalized, by the aid of language, into propositions or axioms; and these propositions still further separate themselves into *ideas*. What is properly innate within us is the faculty, by which we are led to form these judgments so soon as we actually come into contact with the outer world. Our *absolute ideas*, therefore, which are virtually included in them, although not of themselves innate, yet arise by necessity from this *innate power of reason or judgment*, and are by no means, as Locke would have it, conceptions drawn originally from the intimations of sense. By taking up this position he was obliged, as we have seen, to mutilate or altogether destroy some of the most necessary and

undeniable conceptions of the human mind; but he upheld the credit of the theory with which he started, and which, therefore, he seemed bound at all hazards to support. Such was the consequence of reducing his data to his principles, instead of deducing his principles from his data.

The third book of Locke's Essay is a treatise on the philosophy of language. We shall not occupy space by making any remarks upon this. With the exception of some leaning to that species of nominalism, which was afterwards more completely developed by Horne Tooke, there is much practical wisdom contained in the cautions which are given against being led astray by the force of words, or bowing down, as Bacon terms it, to the *Idola Fori*.

Before we close, however, our critique upon this immortal essay, we must offer a few considerations upon the fourth book. Hitherto Locke had been occupied simply and solely with *ideas* and their origin; he had kept himself strictly within the limits of *psychology*, and sought to determine nothing, except what properly belonged to the inner world. In the fourth book he makes the passage from psychology into *ontology*, and institutes inquiries like the following: What is the nature of ideas? What do they represent? What is the knowledge of objective existence we obtain from them? And what confidence may we have in the correctness and reality of this knowledge?—questions which all must admit to be of no small

importance. So long as we regard our ideas simply *as ideas*, it is evident that we are completely shut up within ourselves: how then are we to take the step from the subjective world to the objective; and how are we to know that the one is a veracious manifestation of the other? This leads us naturally to ask, what is Locke's real theory respecting the nature of ideas, — a point, the determination of which has occasioned no little dispute amongst philosophers. Dr. Reid contends, that Locke's "*idea*" is a real existence in the original and proper Aristotelian use of the term, and claims the honour of having exploded this long sustained theory, on the principles of common sense. Dr. Brown withheld from him the honour thus laid claim to, and denied that Locke, in common with many others of the same and a former age, used the term in the sense thus attributed to them. Perhaps the true statement of the case lies midway between these two extremes. Dr. Reid attributes to Locke too much of the peripatetic doctrine, while Dr. Brown as certainly attributes to him just so much too little. That Locke believed all the apparatus of sensible species, intelligible species, and phantasms, as given by Aristotle, we think very improbable; at the same time he manifestly held a representative theory respecting the doctrine of perception; supposing, not with Dr. Reid, that our knowledge of external things is *immediate*, but that, beside the perceiving

mind, and the thing perceived, there is the representation, or *idea* of the latter, as the connecting link between them. This may be seen by consulting the fourth chapter of the fourth book of his "Essay," in which he says,—“It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but by the intervention of the ideas it has of them: our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things.” Here, then, we have plainly his fixed sentiment, that knowledge depends upon the conformity of our ideas with the external things they represent, and that error consists in their non-conformity. In this theory, we conceive, Locke has taken up an untenable position; and we willingly concede therefore to Dr. Reid the honour of having put the whole subject in a clear light, and fixed it as far as he went, on its right foundation.

Viewing the representative theory of human knowledge as we will, it is beset with difficulties. First, on the supposition that the image or idea which intervenes between the mind and the outer world is material, we find it impossible to account for those notions which do not admit of being represented by a material symbol. Of this kind are our notions of secondary qualities, for who can image the material image of blue, or green, or soft, or hard? Of the same nature also are all those notions which come from the spiritual world, for is it to be conceived

that mind, immaterial in itself, throws off a material image in order that it may be the object of its own contemplation? In fact, Locke gives up philosophy altogether as soon as he comes to consider the real existence of anything beyond the material, and throws himself upon revelation as the only source from which we can infer its certainty. Again, if we suppose the *idea* to be immaterial, we are no better off: for here the chief objection against the whole representative hypothesis has its full force. Allow, for argument's sake, that our knowledge does all depend upon the conformity of the idea with its object; how, then, are we to infer this conformity? Without being able to institute some comparison between the image and the original, it is clear we can never know whether they resemble each other or not; but to institute this comparison supposes a *direct* perception of that original, independent of its representative idea, and shuts us up to this alternative—either that we have the means of knowing objects without the intervention of ideas, and therefore that they are unnecessary; or else, if we have no means of knowing them otherwise, that we can never be sure of the conformity between the object and the idea, on which very conformity our knowledge depends; and therefore, can have no secure ground for certain knowledge at all. The refutation of the “ideal system” lies, in fact, almost in a nutshell. The intervening image must be material or immaterial. If it be



material, it still remains to show how the mind can communicate with it without a second image ; if it be immaterial, then how can it communicate with the outward world any better than the mind itself ? The only conclusion to which the whole theory can ultimately lead is that of the most rigid scepticism.

That scepticism is the real result of the theory we have now described is seen from the use that has been actually made of it. Berkeley drew from it his arguments against the existence of the material world, and Hume based upon the same the principles by which he sought to involve the whole superstructure of human knowledge from its very foundations in one scene of doubt and confusion.

Our perceptions, as Dr. Reid has shown, in opposition to this theory, instead of depending upon an intermediate representative idea, are *direct* and *immediate* ; the mind perceives and knows just because it has been so constituted, and possesses *within itself* those first principles (whether we call them with Kant forms of the understanding, or with Reid principles of common sense, or with Brown principles of intuitive belief,) which are the starting points whence all our subsequent and deduced knowledge takes its rise. The more accurate analysis, however, of this theory of perception we must leave until we come to the explanation of the philosophy of "common sense."

Into Locke's views respecting judgment, faith, enthusiasm, and some other points of a minor cha-

racter we shall not enter, because they bear but slightly upon the main features of his philosophy. We cannot part from him, however, without bearing testimony to his singular independence of mind, his acuteness and strength of intellect, his rectitude of character, his honest and unflinching search after truth, and his zeal for the diffusion of a manly, intelligent piety. If, however, we would point out candidly the influence which Locke exerted upon the progress of speculative philosophy, it must be confessed, that notwithstanding all the admirable lessons which his writings contain, they manifested a decided leaning towards sensationalism, and included, though unknown to himself, germs which, after a time, bore the fruits of utilitarianism in morals, of materialism in metaphysics, and of scepticism in religion. To exhibit the process by which this was effected will be the next point to which our attention must be directed.

### SECT. III.—*Effects of Locke in England.*

The “ Essay on the Human Understanding ” enjoyed, from its very first publication, a reputation almost unparalleled in the whole history of philosophy. The principles there advocated with so much acuteness, and so earnest a love of truth, became almost universally diffused ; but unfortunately they fell into the hands of men who being entirely wanting in the simplicity of mind and the sincere

piety which had distinguished their author, appropriated them to purposes altogether foreign to his intentions.

The deistical school of writers, which at this time arose, armed themselves with many of Locke's conclusions in order to enforce their own sceptical opinions. Collins aimed chiefly at establishing upon a firm basis the doctrine of necessity; Dodwell struck out boldly into the path of materialism; while Mandeville, assuming with Locke that there are no innate practical principles in the human mind, dealt a blow at the root of all moral distinctions. From hence originated some of the most acute controversies which the history of mental and moral science present,—controversies which summoned the ability of Stillingfleet, the wit and elegance of Shaftesbury, the acuteness of Norris, and the gigantic strength of Clarke, in opposition to the immoral and irreligious tendencies which seemed likely to flow from the empirical principles that were now apparently taking so firm a hold upon the philosophic spirit of the age. These, however, we must pass over, as their names are better known in the departments of ethics and theology than in that of metaphysics: we have only mentioned them in order to show the more immediate effects of Locke's philosophy upon the literary society of the day, and to indicate the fact that his principles were neither established nor developed without the earnest protest and the

powerful opposition of some of the first thinkers and reasoners of that period.

The next really philosophical writer whom we find carrying out the sensational tendency to its fuller development is David Hartley. The philosophy of Hartley is especially worthy of attention, from the fact of its being the first decided attempt we know of, at combining the study of psychology with the results of modern physiological investigations. Hartley was educated at Cambridge for the medical profession, and was led, both by the nature of his studies and by the influence of the metaphysical school represented in that university by Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Law, to adopt some of the more extreme principles of sensationalism. His first attempt was to propound a theory of sensation, grounded upon an anatomical inspection of the nervous system. Locke, though himself of the medical profession, had never ventured to speculate upon the method by which sensations are communicated to the mind; regarding the subject as purely hypothetical, he probably never formed an opinion upon it, but left it untouched, as belonging to that mysterious and unknown process which connects together our bodily affections and mental feelings. Hartley, on the contrary, desirous of supplying what he considered a deficiency in the philosophy of Locke, proposed to account for the phenomena of sensation by certain *vibrations*, which he supposed to take place in the nervous system.

The vibratory hypothesis of Hartley is too well known by all the readers of modern philosophy to require here to be explained at any length, and besides, is now gone so much into disrepute as hardly to require any refutation; we shall content ourselves, therefore, with making two remarks upon it. The first is, that *as an hypothesis* there is a great improbability of its being true, owing to the extreme unfitness of the soft and pulpy material, of which the nerves are composed, to produce or propagate vibrations. The second remark is, that even if all these physical changes and vibratory movements were *proved* to exist, yet still there would be as great a chasm as ever between the material condition of our sensation and the ultimate mental effect. To say that the feeling itself consists in these nervous movements is absurd. "There may be," says a writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' (Oct. 1806), "little shakings in the brain for anything we know, and there may even be shakings of a different kind accompanying every act of thought or perception; but that the shakings themselves are the thoughts or perception, we are so far from admitting, that we find it impossible to comprehend what can be meant by the assertion. The shakings are certain throbbings, vibrations, or stirrings, in a whitish half fluid substance like custard, which we might see perhaps or feel if we had eyes and fingers sufficiently small or fine for their office. But what should we see or feel, upon the supposition that we

could detect by our senses everything that actually took place in the brain? We should see the particles of this substance change their place a little, move a little up or down to the right or to the left, round about, or zigzag, or in some other course or direction. This is all that we could see if Dr. Hartley's conjecture were proved by actual observation, because this is all that exists in motion according to our conception of it, and all that we mean when we say that there is motion in any substance. Is it intelligible then to say that this motion, the whole of which we see and comprehend, is thought and feeling, and that thought and feeling will exist wherever we can excite a similar motion in a similar substance? In our humble apprehension the proposition is not so much false as utterly unmeaning and incomprehensible." Admitting then the truth of Hartley's *vibratiuncles*, we get no nearer than ever to the explanation of the *mental* phenomena of sensation.

Had our author confined his philosophical speculations to this theory, his name would probably never have come down to our own day in the annals of philosophy: the other doctrines, however, which he grounded upon it, more especially that of association, have given him a lasting reputation amongst the most ingenious writers of the last century. The law of the association of Ideas was first hinted at by Hobbes, who in his "Leviathan" speaks of it in several places, under the phrases "trains of

thought," or "trains of imagination." The *term* association was first used by Locke, in his immortal Essay, to express certain connexions which exist between one thought and another in the flow of our consciousness. Tucker, in his "Light of Nature Pursued," used the word *combination* as better suited to express the phenomena of the case: but Hartley preferred to retain the original word association, although at the same time he made a complete revolution in the meaning which was to be attached to it. In order to appreciate this change of meaning, we should observe that Locke had applied the term "association of ideas" only to those more striking and remarkable combinations, which appear to be rather out of the ordinary course of thought, than to the *law* by which the whole flow of our consciousness is regulated. Hartley, on the other hand, used it to express any combination of thought or feeling whatever, which is capable of becoming habitual by means of repetition.

His theory, then, as nearly as we can convey it in few words, is as follows. The objects of the external world affect, in some manner, the extreme ends of the nerves, which spread from the brain as centre to every part of the body. This affection produces a vibration, which is continued along the nerve until it reaches the brain, where it constitutes the phenomenon we term sensation. When a sensation has been experienced several times, the vibratory movement from which it arises acquires

the tendency to repeat itself spontaneously, even when the external object is not present. These repetitions or *relics* of sensation are *ideas*, which in their turn possess the property of recalling each other by virtue of mutual association among themselves. According to this doctrine, for example, the sight of an apple will recall the sensation formerly produced by the taste, thus giving rise to the *idea* of its taste; and the idea of the taste again will give rise to any other ideas which have been before experienced at the same time. Thus the things to which association applies Hartley considers to be these three—sensations, ideas, and muscular movements (emotions being completely confounded with sensations and therefore not being mentioned separately). These classes of phenomena having been previously experienced together, may recall each other at any time or in any order—a fact which our author briefly expresses by the following law. “If any sensation A, idea B, or muscular motion C be associated a sufficient number of times with any other sensation D, idea E, or muscular motion F, it will at last excite the simple idea belonging to the sensation D, the very idea E, or the very muscular motion F.” So much then concerning association generally.

Passing over Hartley's classification of the laws of association, I shall only stop to notice *one* principle which he makes of supreme importance, and that is the law of transference. The nature of this



law is as follows. An idea is sometimes associated with another through the medium of a third; but in process of time this intermediate idea may be disregarded, and yet the connexion between the first and third may notwithstanding remain. Thus the idea of pleasure, which is so indissolubly connected with *money*, arises from the conveniences which it is able to procure, while in the mind of the miser the conveniences are lost sight of, and the very possession of the money itself is regarded as containing the whole enjoyment. In this way Hartley accounts for almost all the emotions and passions of the human mind. The domestic affections, for instance, arise from the transference of the pleasure derived from parental kindness to the parent itself; the social and patriotic affections from transferring the pleasures of society to the country which affords them; in like manner also the moral and religious affections, the love of virtue, and the love of God arise from the pleasures connected with virtuous and pious conduct, being transferred to the law of action, or to the supreme lawgiver from which these pleasures have emanated. In this way Hartley expands his principle of association, until it affords him an explanation, more or less clearly, of all the multifarious phenomena of man's consciousness.

The subordinate effects of these principles are easy to be imagined. If all our ideas are but relics of sensations, and all excited spontaneously by the laws of association, it is abundantly evident

that the power of the will must be a nonentity, that man can really have no control over his own mind, that he is the creature of irresistible necessity. Hartley was accordingly a firm necessarian. Another natural effect of the theory of vibrations is materialism. I am aware that Hartley is not chargeable with maintaining this doctrine; his sincere religious character, coupled with great acuteness in philosophical thinking, held him back from admitting a system which can seldom be united with deep religious feelings, *never* with eminent metaphysical abilities. But that this philosophy naturally led to materialistic views in others, whose minds were not under the same restraints as his own, was abundantly proved by the school to which he gave origin. A third effect of the Hartleian metaphysics was a bold defence of nominalism which, though a matter of minor consequence in comparison with those above mentioned, yet sufficiently indicated the tendency of the whole system.

That there is great value to be attached to much which Hartley has drawn from the law of association, and that he has afforded an explanation of many phenomena before very imperfectly understood, cannot be denied. The very ardour, however, with which he threw himself into his system, and the very closeness with which he analysed the facts of the case, necessarily imparted a one-sidedness to his philosophy, and led to the neglect of some

other facts equally important. The ground-principles of our intellectual life—the fundamental conceptions, without which even sensations could not be formed into any definite ideas whatever, all these were overlooked; the powers of the will, as exhibited in the working of the intellectual emotions, were summarily reduced to the category of sensation; and thus perception, judgment, memory, all our abstract ideas, and all our moral feelings, were alike consolidated together as the natural effect of the great law of association, and all shewn to emanate from the vibrations of the nervous system! From these considerations it becomes evident how important a link the writings of Hartley formed in the chain of those causes by which the philosophy of sensation was aided on its road to complete empiricism. The result of those writings indeed soon shewed that having conducted his speculations to the very verge of materialism, it was not in his power to prevent *those*, whom he had carried along with him in his reasoning, from overstepping the boundary.

The principles of Hartley found, shortly after his death, an able and zealous expositor in Dr. Priestley. The name of Priestley holds a position in the scientific history of our country which his greatest opponents might envy, and with which his most ardent admirers may be content. It is not now, however, for the first time remarked, that the minds best fitted for prosecuting the labours of

experimental philosophy, are by no means those from which we expect light to be cast into the more obscure region of metaphysical analysis. Priestley's mind was objective to an extreme; he could fix his faith upon nothing which had not the evidence of sense in some way or other impressed upon it. Science, morals, politics, philosophy, religion, all came to him under the type of the sensational; the most spiritual ideas were obliged to be cast into a material mould before they could commend themselves to his judgment or conscience. His intellect was rapid to an extraordinary degree; he saw the bearings of a question according to his own principles at a glance, and embodied his thoughts in volumes, whilst many other men would hardly have sketched out their plan. All this, though admirable in the man of *action*, was not the temperament to form the solid metaphysician, nay, it was precisely opposed to that deep reflective habit, that sinking into one's own inmost consciousness from which alone speculative philosophy can obtain light and advancement. With such tendencies of mind, therefore, and living in an age, the whole bearing of which was away from the ideal to the sensational, it is not surprising that Priestley entered with energy into those principles of Hartley, from which he hoped to reduce all mental science to a branch of physical investigation.

The metaphysical position he assumed, may be

fully seen in his "Examination of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald;" in fact, it is summed up in one extraordinary sentence, where he affirms, that "Something has been done in the field of knowledge by Descartes, very much by Mr. Locke, but most of all by Dr. Hartley, who has thrown more useful light upon the theory of mind, than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world!" After this acknowledgment of admiration towards the writings of Hartley, of course we could hardly expect to find anything else in the metaphysical works of Priestley, than a second edition of the Hartleian philosophy, revised, corrected, and expanded into a more mature form. Such, in fact, was precisely the case. The doctrine of philosophical necessity was more fully argued and more systematically enforced; utilitarian morals were maintained upon a broader basis, and illustrated by more copious examples; and materialism, from which Hartley himself had shrunk back, was now openly avowed.

Priestley rested the truth of materialism upon two deductions. The first was, that thought and sensation are essentially the same thing—that the whole variety of our ideas, however abstract and refined they may become, are, nevertheless, but modifications of the sensational faculty. This doctrine, we shall see, had been more fully maintained in France, by Condillac. The second deduction was, that all sensation, and, conse-

quently, all thought, arises from the affections of our material organization, and, therefore, consists entirely in the motion of the material particles of which the nerves and brain are composed. It is but justice, however, here to add, that Priestley did not push his materialism so far as to evolve any conclusions contrary to the fundamental principles of man's natural religion, or to cut away the evidences of a future state. In the full conviction of these truths he both lived and died. To sum up, then, the precise influence of Priestley upon the progress of sensationalism in our own country in a few words, we may say, that he succeeded in cutting the last tie which had held Hartley to the poor remains of spiritualism, that he reduced the whole phenomena of mind to organic processes, and the mind itself to a material organization.

It might be expected, perhaps, that we should pause here in our history, to offer some remarks upon the abuses to which the principle of association has been subjected in the Hartleian school of philosophy, and to show how many of the simple phenomena of our intellectual and moral being have been there explained by other phenomena far more obscure and complex than themselves; but as this subject will come more fully under our consideration in a future chapter, we must waive the discussion of it for the present, and go on to

exhibit the final issue to which this sensational tendency led.

Priestley had denied the separate reality of *mind* or rather *spirit* in man, but had not rejected the existence of it altogether in the universe. To do this, required another reasoner still more bold in urging his arguments to their ultimate conclusions, and less under the restraints of early religious associations. Such a reasoner appeared in the person of Dr. Darwin, who determined to banish *spirit* altogether from the universe, to make the infinite and omnipresent mind itself synonymous with the all-pervading powers of an impersonal nature, and thus to trample the most cherished of man's religious hopes under the feet of a materialistic unbelief. This we may regard as the culminating point of sensationalism. While idealism proceeds onwards in its conclusions, till it has banished matter, nay, everything else but the one eternal mind, in its various developments, out of existence, this opposed system of philosophy does not stop in the other direction, till it has reduced all mind, even the infinite mind itself, to nature and organization.

In conclusion, the influence which sensationalism exerted *generally* upon the age, may be seen in its bearing upon many of the subordinate branches of philosophy. To take the philosophy of language as an instance, we have in Horne

Tooke the grammarian of this school. It is needless to remind the reader of the ultra-nominalism which he professed; of the ingenious attempt he made in his "*Επεα Πρεποεργα*," to derive every word from some material symbol, and of the inference he drew, that our reason itself is the gradual result of language, instead of language being the direct product of our reason.

The moralist and politician again, of the same philosophy, appeared in the person of Jeremy Bentham, who stands forth as one of the most uncompromising advocates of the utilitarian system of ethics. Archdeacon Paley, another advocate of utilitarian morals, might also be mentioned as having philosophised under the guidance of Locke and of his most devoted follower, Abraham Tucker, and as having erected his ethical system upon principles derived from these sources. The very names of Bentham and Paley, however, remind us that we are already upon the confines of the eighteenth century, and that we must cease to pursue the results of sensationalism in our own country any further, until we come to look more particularly into the *characteristics* of the present age.



SECT. IV.—*Effects of Locke in France and Germany.*

Whilst the philosophy of sensationalism was thus developing itself in England, a similar progress was made in France with still greater energy and far more extensive reputation. The “*Essay on the Human Understanding*” being soon after its appearance translated and extensively read throughout the whole circle of the literati of that country, produced quite as great an impression there as it did on this side the Channel. That there should arise, therefore, in France, as well as in England, defenders and expounders of Locke’s philosophy, was a matter almost of absolute necessity. The first man who undertook this task was *Condillac*, a writer who is universally placed at the head of the whole modern school of the French sensationalism. *Condillac*, like *Hartley* in our own country, came forth as a professed disciple and warm admirer of *Locke*, but in process of time departed equally far, if not still farther, than *Hartley* himself, from the principles of his master. The course, indeed, which he took was a very different one from that of the Cambridge philosopher; but whilst he avoided some of the faults into which that philosopher fell, he certainly went with still hastier steps towards the region of complete empiricism.

The first effort which Condillac made in the department of philosophy was a treatise on the origin of human knowledge (*Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances Humaines*), the very title of which is sufficient to indicate his affinity with Locke, while the work itself proves to be only a reproduction with some modifications (not improvements) of the "Essay on the Human Understanding." The chief point in which we see here the strong tendency of Condillac's mind towards sensationism is in the explanation he gives of *reflection*, as one of the two sources of our ideas. Locke had made a very clear distinction between the passive and the active faculties; he saw plainly that while sensations are produced quite independently of ourselves, there are other powers which are brought into exercise by our own will. In his philosophy, then, sensation is the *passive* source from which we derive ideas, reflection the *active* one; in the former case ideas are, as it were, put into us from without, the mind meanwhile existing simply in a receptive state; in the latter case the active faculties are voluntarily exerted, and from the material afforded by the senses construct a thousand complex ideas for themselves. Condillac at first assuming with Locke, that these are the two only sources of our knowledge, manages in the course of his treatise so completely to modify and transform the nature of reflection, that every thing really distinguishing it from sensation entirely

disappears. First of all, he confounds it with consciousness, making sensation (as we also regard it) the bare feeling arising from any external object; while reflection is simply the self-consciousness of that feeling. After a little time again he analyzes consciousness itself, and reduces it also to one mode of sensation; so that the whole distinction between sensation and reflection is suppressed, the natural activity of the human mind virtually denied, and every inward phenomenon thus brought down to the level of our passive and sensational feelings. Those absolute and pure conceptions of reason which Locke laboured so hard to make compatible with his own theory, Condillac explains with the greatest ease. Relative and absolute are to him one and the same thing. "Ideas," he says, "are absolute when we stop at them, and make them the object of our reflection without referring them to others; but when we consider them as subordinate to others we call them relative;" of such nature is the flimsy yet at the same time elegant analysis by which Condillac disposes of the most grave and subtle metaphysical questions.

The most ingenious part of this work perhaps is that in which he treats of the influence of language upon our mental phenomena. In his theory on this question he coincides to a great extent with Horne Tooke, making language the actual source from which many of our faculties are pro-

duced. Contemplation, recollection, imagination, judgment, reasoning, all those faculties, in a word, which render the human mind superior to that of the lower animals, he supposes to originate in the use of language. In this theory, we conceive, he falls anew into what we have seen already to be the perpetual blunder of sensationalism, namely, the substitution of the occasion for the cause. Language we admit is the instrument by which most of our *complex* mental operations are perfected, but it is far from being the cause of them; on the contrary, the very fact of our being able to use language at all is a sufficient proof of the prior existence of certain faculties within us, without which words would prove utterly unintelligible, and the most perfect language appeal to man no more than it does to a brute. It is, however, the constant tendency of sensationalism from its first commencement to its complete development, to lose sight of the inherent and what we may properly term innate energies of the mind; and then to attribute the phenomena to which they give rise, to the outward *occasion* by which those energies are brought into play. Language is the direct product of the human reason, as created by God; but when it is once formed, then, we allow, it begins directly to react upon the mind which gave it birth, and thus to aid it in its still further advancement.

With this brief notice we must pass away from Condillac's first philosophical production to another

of a more decided character, and which certainly lays a far greater claim to originality,—I mean his *Treatise on Sensations* (*Traité des Sensations*). And here we shall be better able to point out, in what respect our author differs from Hartley, and to compare the systems to which they have respectively given rise with each other. Locke admitted as an ultimate and unresolvable fact, the existence of certain intellectual faculties, of which, it will be remembered, he gives us a distinct classification. Hartley, as we have seen, attempted to account for all these faculties on the principle of association of ideas, and propounded a theory of sensation, based upon supposed vibrations in the nervous system, by which the whole phenomena of association might be explained. In doing this he entirely confounded (as we have shown) our emotional states with our sensational, and having done so considered himself to have succeeded in accounting for all the phenomena, whether of sensation, intellection, or emotion, by means of his favourite vibratiuncles. Condillac, although starting with the same desire of simplifying what Locke had left unresolved, and of finding some *one* principle or other to which all our faculties may be reduced, very soon struck out into a different route. He regarded *sensation* as the one great unresolvable fact to which the chief attention of the philosopher is to be directed,—a fact for which he makes no attempt, like Hartley, to account, respecting which he propounds no theory whatever,

but which, he supposes, we may take as the secure starting point for a complete system of psychology. After pointing out the deficiency of Locke in not discovering, or attempting to discover, the principles by which the different intellectual operations, such as thinking, reasoning, knowing, willing, believing, are generated, he proceeds then to develop his own theory on this question, by showing them to be nothing more or less than *transformed sensations*.

The method by which this is proved is somewhat of the following kind. First, let us assume the mind, as Locke did, to be a "tabula rasa." Then let a simple sensation, as an odour, be experienced. The mind at once becomes occupied with the new feeling, and there commences what we term *attention*. Attention, therefore, is another name for sensation. After a time other sensations are experienced, and the mind becomes occupied with those which *have been*, as well as with those which *are*. When we are occupied with those which have been, and are now past, we term it memory; and memory, therefore, is no other than a transformed sensation. From the co-existence of past and present sensations results comparison, which is no other than a double attention. The comparison of different sensations, again, gives rise to judgment, and judgment to abstraction, &c.; so that all our intellectual powers, one after the other, are neither more nor less than transformed sensations. A similar course is adopted with regard to the

emotions. Sensations are either agreeable or disagreeable; hence arise desire and aversion. These sensations, however, may refer to the past, the present, or prospectively to the future; from whence spring the different passions of remorse, or hope, or joy, or fear,—in a word, the whole phenomena of our emotional nature. Finally, the will itself, with all its mighty energies, is shown to be like the intellect, nothing more than a transformed sensation.

To illustrate this doctrine, Condillac supposes a perfectly organized human being to be created, encased in a marble covering; and then, proceeding to lift this covering, he attempts, with great ingenuity, to show how the different mental phenomena would make their appearance one after the other, as the impressions of the external world were more freely admitted, until *the man* became morally and intellectually complete. Now, in all this he has marked very beautifully the various *occasions* upon which his statue would require the impulses derived from the external world, in order to bring its various faculties into operation; but he forgets that these occasions might exist for ever, and be eternally prompting to action, but that no intelligence would ever result unless the faculties were at hand, and all ready prepared for reacting upon them. Condillac has, in fact, from the very first step of his analysis, in which he explains attention, substituted the occasion for the

cause. No doubt, the experiencing of a sensation is the occasion on which we first shew the phenomenon that is termed attention, but we can by no means conclude from hence that sensation is the cause, and affords all the elements of it. Sensation is a purely passive thing ; we experience it just as long as the organic impression lasts, and no longer ; attention is something active and voluntary, which we can continue or suspend at pleasure ; the one is a production from without, the other an energy from within ; the one is necessary, the other free ; the one is the action of the outward world upon the inward, the other is the reaction of the inward world upon the outward. In the very first step of his reasoning, therefore, Condillac makes a fatal oversight which vitiates all the rest, and deprives the whole superstructure of sensationalism, as he had erected it, of any solid foundation.

The next step of his analysis is not more successful, that, namely, in which he derives the various faculties of memory, comparison, judgment, &c., from attention. When we attend to a sensation which *has been*, he argues, we are said to remember. But how, we ask, are we to do this ? By what means is the sensation retained while others are rushing in upon us ? Something more than mere attention is assuredly requisite to account for this. Again, comparison is said to be a double attention ; but is the whole of what



we mean by comparison comprised in the mere perception of the two things compared? Far from it. I can attend to two things without comparing them, or without being able to compare them; comparison supposes a *balancing of relations*, mere perception supposes nothing of the kind. Still less is it possible to reduce the power of the will to this source—a power which, in its conscious freedom and spontaneous activity, is as unlike the passive phenomena of sensation as life differs from death. But into this discussion we must not enter; enough, we trust, has been said already just to point out the fundamental error of Condillac's philosophy, enough to shew that however you may pour in impressions from without, the supposed statue, though replete with life, must still remain mentally dark and inactive, until the spark of reason, and the native power of the will, begin to react upon them. To sum up, then, in few words, the influence of Condillac upon the progress of philosophy, we should say that he began a consistent disciple of Locke, and ended (in everything but drawing its last conclusions) an advocate of complete sensationalism.

Condillac left the position of speculative philosophy in France much in the same state as Hartley did in England; they both laid down the principles of extreme sensationalism, but both, owing to their good sense and religious feeling, hesitated to draw the ultimate conclusions. Those conclusions

however, soon made their appearance in France, to a much greater extent than they have ever done in England ; so much so, that they seemed for a time entirely to absorb all other philosophy. Helvetius, Saint Lambert, and Condorcet, followed immediately in the track that had been thus pointed out, and applied the new psychological principles which had burst with such éclat upon society, more especially to the department of ethics. First of all, Helvetius, carrying this notion of empiricism to the farthest extremity it would admit, founded upon it a moral system of undisguised selfishness. His primary position is, that man owes all his superiority over the lower animals to the superior organization of his body ; indeed he pushes this principle to such an extent as to affirm, that the human hand is the great agent in the world's civilization, and that, but for its capability, we should never have risen above the brutes around us. Proceeding from this point, his chief positions are briefly these. That all minds are originally equal ; that every faculty and emotion they possess is derived from sensation ; that pleasure is the only good, and that self-interest is the true ground of morality upon which the whole frame-work of individual action and political right depends.

Saint Lambert followed closely in the steps of Helvetius, treating first of the *nature* of man, and then of his *duties*. With regard to human nature,

he maintains that man, when he first enters upon the stage of life, is simply an organized and sentient mass, and that whatever feelings or thoughts he may afterwards acquire, still they are simply different manifestations of the sensational faculty, occasioned by the pressure of his various wants and necessities. With regard to ethics, he maintains that, as man possesses only sensations, his sole good must be personal enjoyment, his only duty the attainment of it, and that, as we may be mistaken as to what objects are really adapted to promote our pleasure, the safest rule by which we can judge of duty in particular cases is public opinion. In his "Catechisme Universel," a book intended for public education, he has divided the whole mass of man's duty into three classes. His duty to himself, to his own family, and to society at large; while the duties of religion are never mentioned, and the very name of God altogether excluded. Condorcet's fundamental doctrine of ethics is the present perfectability of mankind, both individually and socially, by means of education; a doctrine which he proposes to substitute in place of the sanctions both of morality and religion, as the great regenerating principle of human nature.

The names of brilliant writers, however, crowd so thick upon us in this prolific period of French literature, that it is impossible to do more than select those which give a connected view of the

regular development of the sensationalistic tendency. The crowning piece in which the ultimate results of the whole system are concentrated, was presented to the world by the Baron d'Holbach, in his "*Système de la Nature*," a work in which materialism, fatalism, and avowed atheism, all combine to form a view of human nature, which even Voltaire pronounced to be illogical in its deductions, absurd in its physics, and abominable in its morality.\* The whole history of the literary society of France, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, is, in fact, but a comment upon the progress of sensationalism towards its ultimate climax. The school of Voltaire shews us the effects of it while still incomplete, shrinking, as it yet did, from that hard materialism, that blind fatality, and that daring atheism, to which it afterwards attained. But the way to all this was already prepared; the bud was already formed, which only needed time to expand into the full light of day in order to shew its colours in their very deepest dye. In short, let any one view the brilliant circles of talent and impiety, which at once enlivened and disgraced the French capital, rendered famous by the wit and learning of D'Alembert, Diderot, Dupuis, Baron de Grimm, Galiani, Madame d'Epinay, not to mention others

\* The reader will find this work well described, and ably, though briefly analyzed, in a note appended to Lord Brougham's "*Discourse on Natural Theology*."

equally celebrated in the literary world, and he has a complete reflection, as from a mirror, of the philosophy of sensationalism when expanded into all its various ramifications, and at the same time brought down to the level of daily life.

But the great literary manifestation of that age and country, I mean the French Encyclopedia of Sciences, may be regarded as the formal embodiment of the very spirit of its philosophy. Nature, in her outward manifestations, is the foundation of all its researches, man is to it but a mass of organization, mind the development of our sensations, morality self-interest, and God the diseased fiction of an unenlightened and enthusiastic age. The whole intellect being thus concentrated upon the outward and material, gave rise, it is true, to the noblest discoveries in the department of physical science; but, at the same time, religion, alas! was disowned, morality degraded, and man himself made but a feeble link in the great chain of events by which nature is inevitably accomplishing her blind but glorious designs. The storm of the revolution to which these principles, in their political bearing, had not a little tended, broke in upon this scene of philosophical irreligion, from the confusion of which a fresh and regenerating element sprang up, which has given to the nineteenth century a new state of society, a new political constitution, and, as we shall hereafter see, a new philosophy likewise.

Before concluding this chapter, we must just hint at the fact, that the philosophy of Locke, in addition to its mighty influence upon England and France, penetrated also into Germany. The court of Frederick the Great gathered around it many of the first literary characters of France, and thus afforded a channel by which the writings of Locke, together with those of his disciples, flowed into that country. Without occupying any space in describing the works of Feder, of his pupil Tittel, of Weisshaupt, and of other names which are but little known in this country, I may just mention that Herder and Tiedeman, both celebrated for their great services in elucidating the history of philosophy, belong, in a certain degree, to the school of Locke. Sensationalism, however, played but a feeble part in this country, as it was soon eclipsed by the great hero of idealism, who, for more than a quarter of a century, attracted to himself the eye of every philosophical inquirer as to the luminary of the age in which he lived and shone.

The whole sketch we have thus given of the sensationalistic philosophy, forms one connected illustration of the effects, which naturally flow from giving predominance to one out of the three fundamental ideas of the human mind, that, namely, of finite nature, or the not-me. As this idea is a true one, the philosophy which originates in it gives us true results in its own department,

that of physical science, but as it is not *the only* fundamental idea that exists in the mind, we soon become sensible of the errors in which we are involved, when we attempt to build upon it the whole fabric of human knowledge.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE PROGRESS OF IDEALISM FROM THE PERIOD OF DESCARTES TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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BEFORE we proceed to the historical sketch, to which this chapter is devoted, we shall occupy a few lines to remind the reader of the principle by which we are guided in forming it. We have shewn that there are three fundamental notions existing in the human mind, as the primary elements of thought: 1st, that of finite self; 2dly, that of finite nature; 3dly, that of the absolute, the unconditioned, the infinite. The whole multiplicity of our conceptions are referrible to one of these three, as the irreducible notion, or category from which it springs: the first including all inward phenomena, the second all outward phenomena, and the third embracing those various ideas of infinity and perfection, which we attribute neither to nature nor self, but to some existence equally removed beyond both.

As these three notions universally exist in the human mind, we naturally expect to find them all three occupying a place in the philosophy of



every age, and seldom, perhaps never, does such an expectation deceive us. There are some systems of philosophy which admit them all, assigning the greater importance sometimes to one and sometimes to another; while there are other systems which are built up entirely upon one of the three as their foundation, to the complete exclusion of the rest. The superstructure of sensationalism, for example, when perfected, rests solely upon the basis of the *second* of these notions—that of the external or material world; and we have seen in the last chapter in what way this notion was gradually made to occupy the place of the other two, until first the finite mind of man, and at last the infinite mind of God, were reduced to matter and organization, both cognisable through the medium of the senses. In the present chapter we are to shew, in a like manner, the progress of idealism from those systems which have given their chief, though not exclusive, attention to the nature and self-acting powers of the human spirit, to those in which the material world has disappeared, and *mind* become the sole existence in the universe. As idealism, however, includes both the notion of self and also that of the absolute, we shall see that it sometimes assumes a subjective form, and sometimes an objective, according to the predominance of one of these notions over the other. In these different forms, for example, it played a very prominent part in the philosophy of the ancient world. Our

present object, however, is not to take cognisance of it at that period, but rather to see in what manner, and to what extent the idealistic tendency has shewn itself from the commencement, and during the progress of the modern schools of metaphysical science.

SECT. I.—*First Movement as seen in Descartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza.*

Of the whole modern movement of metaphysical science we have already pointed out Bacon and Descartes as the founders; the former evincing a predominant tendency to sensationalism, the latter to idealism. For Bacon we claim the decided superiority in comprehensiveness of mind. He seemed to take in at one glance the whole circumference of human knowledge; he knew how to assign to each separate branch its proper position, to detect the prejudices by which it was impeded, and to furnish the true method by which advancement in every case was to be made. Descartes, while he by no means neglected physical science, and indeed stood forth as one of the first mathematicians of his day, yet was chiefly pre-eminent for his power of intense reflection, and his acute analysis of mind and its operations. Bacon had shown the true principles of inductive philosophy in their most general forms—Descartes took hold of those principles and applied them to the investigation of the human mind. By

so doing, he has unquestionably merited the reputation of standing at the head of the whole modern movement of metaphysical philosophy. The key to this movement was furnished by the "Novum Organum;" but it was the French philosopher who applied it to the door of the human spirit and first entered there with the lamp of *analysis* in his hand.

In reviewing the life and literary labours of Descartes, the first thing which strikes us forcibly is his complete independence of all authority. It was before he attained his twentieth year that he threw up the dogmas he had been taught by the Jesuits at La Flechè, and determined by the simple energy of his own mind to create a new philosophy; that is, to lay a new foundation for the whole superstructure of human knowledge. This very determination pointed out to him in part the *method* he should pursue. Left to the simple power of his own reflection, he was naturally led to assume the human consciousness as the true starting point for all scientific research, and the analysis of the facts of our consciousness as the only proper means of creating a sound philosophy; and in thus doing he established the fundamental principle (being, in fact, a peculiar application of Lord Bacon's inductive method) which we regard as the corner-stone of all the metaphysics of modern Europe. Let us see, then, how he proceeded in this analysis.

The first thing that we are conscious of, begins

Descartes, is a multiplicity of ideas, of various kinds, passing in succession before our inward view. But of these we soon find some to be so contradictory to others, that it is impossible for any one to admit them all as veracious. The real philosopher, indeed, will admit *none* except those which can be proved strictly consonant with the truth of things. The primary position, therefore, from which all philosophy springs is *doubt*.

There is one thing, however, of which we cannot doubt, and that is *thought*. If on the one hand I admit a truth, I admit it by means of my power of thinking; or, if on the other, I doubt it, the very act of doubting implies the same power, inasmuch as to doubt is to think; so that no scepticism, however rigid, can by any means deny this one fact without destroying itself. Whilst, however, we are constrained to admit thought as the first veritable fact, we cannot but see, at the same time, that there is a subject to which this phenomenon belongs, and a subject, moreover, which is conscious of its own states. We conclude, therefore, that Being, intelligent, conscious Being, is implied and postulated in thinking; a truth which was expressed by Descartes in the celebrated sentence, "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" Few philosophical aphorisms have been more frequently repeated, few more contested than this, and few assuredly have been so little understood by those who have held up its supposed fallacy to the greatest ridicule.

Had Descartes intended this aphorism to be in the proper logical sense an argument to prove our own existence, there is no doubt but that it would be chargeable with a "petitio principii." Such an intention, however, he distinctly disclaims in his reply to Gassendi, and explains his meaning to be simply this,—That the very moment there are phenomena of any kind within our consciousness, that moment the mind becomes cognisant of its own existence; and that were there no consciousness there would be no possible evidence of the existence of an intelligent principle. The scientific form of this truth Descartes considered to be the sentence already quoted, "Cogito, ergo sum."

Not only is the fact of our own being, however, implied in our consciousness, but from the nature of thought, Descartes considered we could legitimately conclude respecting the nature of the mind itself; that, as the one is simple and unextended, possessing none of the qualities of body, the other also must be of a corresponding essence. The mind itself, therefore, he regarded as simple and spiritual in its nature, and in that one fact he found the certainty of its immortality.

A foundation being thus laid, Descartes proceeds to erect his philosophical system upon it. The human mind, he goes on to show, whose existence and nature has now been defined, is the subject of many ideas. It is required, therefore, to determine how many out of all these are to be considered

true ones, and what the criterion by which we are to distinguish the genuine from the false. This criterion he lays down to be *clearness* and *distinctness*. A distinct idea is always a true one, an indistinct is false. But now, out of the whole multitude of our conceptions, there is *one* which stands forth both by its clearness and its uniqueness above all the rest—that, namely, of an infinite and all-perfect Being. The fact, therefore, that we can frame this idea within the mind Descartes considers an invincible argument that such a Being exists; since a finite mind could never derive the notion of an infinite one either from itself or from any other source, except that source were found in an all-perfect Being himself.

The idealistic tendency of Cartesianism is sufficiently evident in these its first principles—principles which lead us to regard some of our most important notions as derived simply from the inherent activity of the mind without any reference whatever to sensation or to the material world around us. The next question we must consider with regard to this philosophy is, How does Descartes make the transition from the inward world to the outward, and on what does our knowledge of the latter depend? To understand this we must observe, that in the threefold classification he gives us of our ideas there is one class corresponding to what we term sensations, and which we are conscious must have some cause or other dis-

tinct from our own will. What then is the cause from which they take their rise? Appeal to the senses and they give us no reply, since all they acquaint us with are qualities not essences. From these, then, let us appeal to our reason, and in answer, it points us to the Being of all mental and moral perfection, upon whose veracity we may depend, and who could not have formed our senses and constituted our minds in such a manner as to make our life one perpetual scene of deception. Hence, the external world is a reality, but a reality which rests solely upon our prior evidence of the existence and perfections of God. This argument we certainly regard as one of the weakest points in the whole of Descartes' metaphysical philosophy, inasmuch as it implies a decided paralogism. The authority of our faculties is first appealed to, to establish the being of God, and then the authority of God is appealed to, to establish the veracity of the perceptive faculty. A more accurate analysis of our consciousness would have shown him, that the idea of external nature is as direct and as sure as is that of the Infinite and Eternal.

We have, it is true, in the Cartesian philosophy, all three of the primary conceptions to which we have reduced the whole mass of our intellectual phenomena. We have, first, the notion of self, then that of God, and lastly, by implication from these, that of the material world. But, by viewing the mind more in the efforts of its reason than of

its will, and by assigning to it innate ideas rather than innate and active faculties, he weakened the notion both of human liberty and of man's distinct personality. By assigning, again, our sense-perceptions to Divine interposition (an idea which was soon modified into the doctrine of occasional causes) he removed the notion of matter to a vast distance, and hewed away the chief foundation on which its reality rests; while, amidst all this, the notion of the infinite and all-perfect Being attained a predominance great and all-absorbing, just in proportion as the others were weakened and diminished. To sum up, therefore, our estimate of Descartes' influence upon philosophy, we should say, that, while he taught the true principle of mental analysis, and deduced from it many splendid results, yet that his writings, upon the whole, tended to elevate the idea of the infinite and absolute above all others, and thus prepared the way, as we shall soon find, for a complete system of *objective idealism*.

Into the physics, the physiology, and some other branches of the Cartesian philosophy we forbear to enter, as they are of little or no worth except to warn us, how easily the acutest minds, though starting from correct principles, may lose the road, and how soon, when blinded by a false argument, they may take the step from a rigid system of demonstration to one of astounding credulity. Between the first and the last words which Des-



cartes uttered, in the department of philosophy, there is a distinction almost as wide asunder as the poles. His starting principle,—that mental philosophy consists in an analysis of the human consciousness,—is the foundation of all subsequent psychological investigations down to the present day. His system, when completed, gives us, on the other hand, the infallible germ of a pure idealism.

Amongst the followers of Descartes, we must distinguish those who embraced his philosophy *as a whole*, and evolved still further the results contained in it, from those who simply followed his *method*, and produced from it a philosophy of their own. To the former belong only his immediate successors, to the latter belong all the analytic philosophers, whether of the sensationalistic or idealistic school, of the latter part of the seventeenth and of the eighteenth centuries. It is, then, with Cartesianism *as a whole*, not as a method, that we have now to do ; and the progress of this may be summed up by a brief reference to three men, of uncommon philosophical genius, in whose writings its extreme results have been developed. The first of these was Arnold Geulinx, a native of Antwerp, who, in common with many more of the *litterati* of France and Holland, entered enthusiastically into the Cartesian principles on their first publication to the world. It was Geulinx, in fact, who first brought out, in its proper form, the celebrated doctrine of *occasional causes*, ac-

ording to which God himself is the direct agent in all the related movements of the soul and the body, while the affections of the latter afford the *occasion* upon which he produces the corresponding sensations in the former. This was clearly an additional step taken towards the formation of a system of objective idealism.

The next in the order of time of the three philosophers I have referred to was Spinoza, but in the order of development, we should rather assign the second place to Malebranche. They both, in fact, wrote very nearly at the same period, and to a great extent, if not entirely, independently of one another; so that there is no real error committed whichever we place first upon the list, while both are separate proofs of the actual tendency of the Cartesian principles. Malebranche, as a thinker, as a writer, and as an earnest lover both of truth and goodness, merits to stand almost at the head of the *litterati* of his country. His thoughts are always clear, his observations acute, his style luminous and attractive, and his spirit truthful and sincere. It would be difficult to find in any language a more able prophylactic against error than is contained in his great work "*De la Recherche de la Verité*," or more acute remarks on the various methods by which deceptions gain an influence over the mind. Our present object, however, is to view Malebranche simply in his relation to the Cartesian philosophy.

The notion of the absolute, as we have seen, had been brought by Descartes so prominently into his later philosophy, that the idea of finite mind as a self-acting and causative principle was much weakened, and its perception of the material world made to depend in every case upon the interposition of Divine power. Now, the whole of what is peculiar to Malebranche arose from the more intense view which he took of this feature in the Cartesian philosophy, from the still greater predominance which was thus given to the power of the great first cause, and the tendency consequently engendered of absorbing *in it*, the influence of all secondary causes throughout the universe.

The two kinds of existence that are known in the world, according to Malebranche, are body and spirit, of which the former possesses the qualities of extension and mobility, the latter the corresponding attributes of understanding and will; but as both are equally finite and dependent, and have no source of action within themselves; there can be, on the one hand, no changes in material things, and on the other no thoughts or feelings existing in minds, without the immediate will and power of the great first cause. Hence follows, by very easy steps, the whole of Malebranche's well-known metaphysical theory; for, since on this principle, there can be no action of external things upon the mind, nor any reaction of mind upon them, without the direct interposition of the Deity;

and since the ideas of all things must exist in the mind of the Creator (as Plato had so abundantly demonstrated), the most natural conclusion was, that the human mind sees everything in the Divine, and that God himself is our intelligible world. We have no further occasion, therefore, to attempt the solution of the knotty point upon which so many philosophers had toiled, namely, the method by which matter and spirit mutually affect each other, it being entirely solved on this one simple principle, that it is in God that our minds live and move and have their being. What, then, it might be rejoined to this (if we only see the archetypes of things in God) is the use of the material world at all? and why should we assume its existence? To this Malebranche replies by appealing to revelation, which assures us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; so that the very existence of matter was made by him to depend upon the interpretation of a passage of Scripture, which interpretation only needed to be invalidated, in order to plunge us at once into complete idealism. The whole effect of Malebranche's philosophy, accordingly, was to merge all secondary causes into the one infinite cause; to diminish, proportionably, the notion of human liberty, and to suspend the whole material world upon one slender thread, which it merely required a little exegetical ingenuity to snap for ever asunder.

It is to Spinoza, however, that we must attribute the honour (if, indeed, it is to be esteemed such) of drawing forth from the Cartesian principles their ultimate results. Descartes and Malebranche both aimed at employing a strictly consecutive method in their philosophy, and both were led, more or less, into error, by attempting to ground upon demonstration what really can only rest upon the direct authority of our consciousness. Spinoza, animated with a still higher love of this same method, commenced his philosophical career by an attempted reduction of the Cartesian principles to the geometrical form; to which attempt he added some further ideas (termed by him "*Cogitata metaphysica*"), that were intended to point out various other developments of the same philosophy. His most celebrated writings, containing particularly his "*Ethics*," were only published after his death, and it is from these chiefly that we draw that peculiar system of philosophy, of which we shall now attempt to give as clear an account as our necessary brevity, and its frequent obscurity will admit.

Spinoza begins by a general investigation of the different methods by which we gain knowledge; the result of which investigation is as follows: first, that in the natural use of our senses we come to an imperfect kind of knowledge, which rests simply on the authority of perception; secondly, that out of our single perceptions we make general ones, by

the power we possess of combining them together. In both these cases, however, we gain only a contingent and not by any means a *real* knowledge. Knowledge, properly so called, only arises, thirdly, when we grasp by the reason abstract ideas themselves. The process of abstraction, however, would go on in its generalization to infinity (*regressus in infinitum*) if there were not some ultimate, unalterable idea, which supposes no other beyond it, and at which, consequently, it must stop. Such an idea can only be found in the notion of *substance*, which is absolutely self-existent, and self-conscious, and needs no proof to establish its reality. Substance being the ultimate and absolute existence, must be infinite, and can therefore undergo no change; nay, the very attributes we assign to it, of *extension* and *thought*, are only the two different modes under which we conceive of its one unchangeable essence. Since, however, we must necessarily conceive of everything as having one of these two properties, it follows that we must attribute them both to the Divine and infinite substance, and consider them as existing in it indivisibly and absolutely. This infinite substance is what we term God—a being, not as men suppose, possessing a distinct personality and operating according to final causes; but simply an absolute essence, which is ever unfolding its own self-existent nature in the universe.

But now comes the most difficult question,

namely, how from the infinite and unchangeable substance the phenomenal world around us can be deduced. The world cannot be *created* by it, since every effect is analogous to its cause, and the finite holds no analogy to the infinite. Neither can the world be considered in a dualistic point of view as it was by some of the ancient philosophers; it follows, then, that all the phenomena around us must be parts, or rather modes (*modi*), of the Divine substance; which, according as we grasp them by the senses or the reason, are considered under the form of time, or of eternity,—that is, are viewed either in relation to other *modi*, or referred to the infinite substance itself.

Now, there are apparently two kinds of existences around us, the one having the attribute of extension, the other of thought. These are to be explained on the following principle. The material world consists of modifications of the infinite extension, the mental world of modifications of the infinite thought; so that, the changes of the one must absolutely answer to the changes of the other, and the processes of nature be precisely correspondent with the processes of thought in the human mind. The link of connexion between the various modifications of these two principles is what we term *the soul*.

Such are, in brief, the chief positions in Spinoza's metaphysical system. With these positions, however, his ethical doctrines are very closely

connected, and to these, therefore, we must for a moment advert. Good and evil, he maintains, are not grounded on the nature of things, otherwise they could both be attributed to the Godhead; they only refer to our *relations* in the world, the one being another name for *action*, the other for *passion*. The difference between the good man and the bad is, that the former has a greater sum of action in him than the latter. Right is only the correlate of power, and in a state of nature can never be violated, except through the deficiency of might; so that the object of all government is the exercise of power, and all law is simply limitation. In this respect the philosophy of Hobbes and Spinoza, *i. e.* the extremes of sensationalism, and idealism meet, and evolve the same conclusions.

Spinoza, however, goes on to shew, that by referring all things back to the Divine substance, and viewing them as modifications of it, we can rise to a higher knowledge and a higher species of ethics than that just described. On the lower, or relative principle of morals, self-preservation is the aim of all our action; on the higher or absolute principle, our first aim is to retain within us the full power and influence of our pure reason. When this is the case, both the knowledge and the love of God must result, which is no other than the Divine thought realizing itself in us. On the lower principle of ethics there is room for contention between man and man, between principle



and principle; but on the higher all contention ceases, inasmuch as we approach nearer to the Divine and absolute existence. Such are the general outlines of Spinoza's philosophy,—a philosophy in which our whole individuality is absorbed in the Divine substance, in which human freedom gives place to the most absolute fatalism, and in which God, deprived of all personality, becomes synonymous with the universe, embracing in himself alone all its endless phenomena.

The foundation of all these results is to be found in the full expansion of the error in which, as we have seen, both Descartes and Malebranche were involved. Both these philosophers admitted the three fundamental notions of the human reason—the finite self, finite nature, and the absolute; but they manifested a constantly increasing tendency of making the last predominant, while they proportionally narrowed the sphere of the two former. Malebranche, as we saw, went so far as to deny all secondary causes, and to rest the evidence of the material world simply on revelation. One more step only was needed to complete this movement of objective idealism, and absorb both man and nature in God. This is precisely the fundamental principle of Spinozism—a principle upon which he has built a system of metaphysical and ethical philosophy with the most rigid logic and admirable ingenuity.

With Spinoza, the development of Cartesianism,

properly so called, ended. He pushed its principles to their utmost length, exhibited the results to which they must necessarily give rise, evolved a twofold system of ethics, which to most minds appear absolutely contradictory of each other, and left a monument of his genius which multitudes have admired, but no one ever fully adopted. We come back, therefore, now to our own country, that we may inquire what tendencies towards idealism, and what effects of the Cartesian philosophy, meanwhile manifested themselves in the land of Bacon and Hobbes.

SECTION II.—*Second Movement—English Polemical Idealism.*

The idealistic school which we have just reviewed was an original one, and seemed to flow naturally from the very mental constitution and tendencies of those by whom it was founded and perfected. The same remark, we shall hereafter see, may be applied perhaps to an equal extent to that school of German idealism which in the present day has borne such abundant fruits. With the English idealism the case is different, for whenever this tendency has manifested itself strongly in our country, it has rather been brought out in opposition to the growing errors of sensationalism, than arisen from any spontaneous movement of the national mind. We would not indeed deny altogether to

the national mind of our own country (as sometimes has been done) the vigorous power of purely abstract thinking; but still the fact is not to be disputed, that the practical element has ever been in the ascendancy, and that the rationalistic method of philosophising has seldom been carried to any great extent, except it has been occasioned and almost necessitated by the excesses of the opposite school. Hence we designate the English movement in this direction by the appellation of *polemical idealism*.

Every energetic movement of sensationalism, we find, has opposed to it a corresponding movement of idealism. It was the materialism of Hobbes which *first* gave rise to the rationalistic method in our own country, and after that, it was the empiricism of Locke which nourished it; it was Locke's sceptical successors again, who drove the idealistic tendency forward to the extreme of Berkleyism, while it was Hume who roused up the warfare in which the present metaphysical school of Scotland was cradled. To the men, therefore, who took the chief part in these contests it is our present duty to revert.

The materialism of Hobbes was one of the boldest attempts at forming a complete system of human knowledge which the history of philosophy exhibits, and was written in that logical, and at the same time earnest, popular, and attractive style which could not fail to acquire for it considerable atten-

tion. Lord Edward Herbert of Chérbury was a contemporary with Hobbes, and though he is not to be regarded as a direct opponent (inasmuch as none of his works were written with this precise end in view), yet it was undoubtedly the prevalence of the Ultra-Baconian principles, which he saw spreading around him, that gave rise to the very opposite system which that acute philosopher advocated. Much as this writer has fallen out of notice, yet in his works are to be found the germ of almost all the arguments which were afterwards brought forward in support of the independence of the human reason. He asserted, as strongly as Descartes did, the doctrine of innate ideas, and maintained as well the existence of a rational instinct (*rationalis instinctus*) as the source at once of man's highest knowledge, and of his purest religious sentiment. The opposition in which his philosophy stands to that of Hobbes, as well as to that which Locke afterwards originated, is seen from his fundamental position,—that the mind, instead of being like a blank sheet of paper, is like a closed book. This book he shews is opened by the aid of experience, that is, by the influence of the external world acting upon the senses, and when opened, shews a number of general principles (*communes notiones*) inscribed there, to which every question must be ultimately referred as to a common and infallible standard. On the question of religion, it is true, his conclusions were as much too sweeping on the one side, as

Hobbes's were on the other, inasmuch as he advocates a system of complete rationalism; but on purely philosophical questions, few men, as unaided and independent thinkers, have come nearer to the truth respecting some of the most important points, than did the philosopher of Cherbury.

The professed antagonist of Hobbism, however, was Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough, a man of the most extensive learning, and conversant with every branch of philosophy as it then existed. It was to the moral principles which Hobbes advocated that the chief hostility was generally felt, and accordingly the polemical philosophy of this period, led on by Cumberland, was for the most part confined to the department of *ethics*. To the unqualified egotism of Hobbes, this prelate opposed certain connate principles, termed by him laws of nature, according to which men are prompted to the exercise of all the social feelings, and to the construction of the whole frame-work of society. These laws of nature he regarded, as the direct product of *right reason*, in which feature of his philosophy he comes very near to the doctrine of the practical reason, upon which Kant afterwards built up the whole of his moral philosophy. The point, therefore, where Cumberland shews a leaning to the rationalistic method is that, in which he makes reason the source of our moral and benevolent feelings, and maintains the existence of certain natural laws quite unconnected with experience,

which impel us to the perception and performance of moral duties.

Contemporary with Cumberland was another thinker of the same order, but of still greater compass, if not of greater originality of mind. Amongst all the early philosophical writers of our country there is not one, who displayed so complete a mastery over the metaphysical systems of antiquity, and not one who has left behind him so vast a monument of varied and accurate learning, as Ralph Cudworth, the author of the "Intellectual System." He belonged to a company of Cambridge theologians sometimes called Arminians, sometimes Latitude-men, or Latitudinarians, but more accurately denominated Platonic divines, who to a sincere love of Christianity and a corresponding purity of life, united a deep admiration for the philosophy of Plato. From this source there was infused into the philosophical principles of Cudworth, a strong tendency to the same species of lofty idealism, which distinguished the writings of the great founder of the academy. Deeply imbued with the spirit of that soaring philosophy, which regarded matter as the basis of every thing grovelling, and which only admitted true science at all to exist until the soul, shaking off the trammels of sense, gazes immediately upon the pure ideas of the Divine mind, he looked with alarm and contempt upon a system, like that of Hobbes, which made matter or body the object of

all philosophy, and brought down to the level of sense the most pure and ethereal elements of the human consciousness. Convinced that such principles would degrade humanity, would involve the grossest fatalism, and would banish God himself from the universe which he had made, Cudworth formed the plan of tracing all such errors up to their primary source, of exposing their futility, and of tearing up by their roots doctrines, which he saw, must tend to destroy all moral distinctions and overturn all religious worship. The "Intellectual System" was the product of this design, in which he combats every possible form of atheism with the acutest reasoning and most amazing learning. This formed, however, only the first part of his proposed task; it is evident from the preface of it that he contemplated two other parts to complete it.

He shows in the introduction to that work, that there are *three* false hypotheses of the universe, or three possible modes of fatalism; the first of which is absolute atheism, the second a theism without morality or religion, and the third a theism which admits moral distinctions and religious worship, but which makes no stand against fatalism by an enlightened doctrine of human liberty. Atheism, then, is demolished in the work to which we have already referred, namely, the "Intellectual System." The treatise on eternal and immutable morality, published after his death, was in all

probability, the sketch of the second part; and there now exists among his manuscripts in the British Museum a "Discourse on Liberty and Necessity," which we have every reason to believe was the outline of the third.

It is in the second treatise, that on "Eternal and Immutable Morality," that Cudworth shows more especially his firm opposition to every species of sensationalism. He points out there with great clearness the fact, that the mind of man possesses pure conceptions (*νοήματα*), which cannot possibly be derived from the senses; and maintains, with Plato, that these are no other than the eternal truths, which must ever have existed in the mind of God, and to the perception of which the human mind may ever increasingly attain. "If we reflect," he says, "on our own cogitations of these things (*νοήματα*), we shall sensibly perceive that they are not phantastical (*i. e.* imaged to us by the senses), but noëmatical; as, for example, justice, equity, duty, obligation, cogitation, opinion, intellection, volition, memory, verity, falsity, cause, effect, genus, species, nullity, contingency, possibility, impossibility, and innumerable others." The rationalistic or ideal tendency of Cudworth is here sufficiently apparent, so much so, that we may without hesitation place him down as the great philosopher of his age in whose works we find a complete counterpoise against the more popular but far less erudite writings of Hobbes.



Cudworth died about four years after the publication of Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," so that we may regard him as closing the controversy against Hobbes, and representing the final state of the rationalistic philosophy before Locke introduced a new era into the history of metaphysics. The next appearance, therefore, which the idealistic tendency made in England was the reaction, that took place after Locke's death, against the principles he had advocated in his Essay.

Lord Shaftesbury, who had been an intimate friend and companion of Locke, was one of the first to point out the dangerous influence which his total rejection of all innate practical principles was likely to exert upon the interests of morality. So strongly did he feel this, that in one of his letters in which he is denouncing the popular deism of his day, he says, "It was Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same as those of God) unnatural and without foundation in our minds." Not that Shaftesbury admitted the existence of innate ideas in the Cartesian sense, or held any principles that could lead to a system of pure idealism; but he saw clearly the consequences, to which Locke's sensationalism must ultimately lead, and maintained that if we have no ideas actually innate, yet we have a nature and a reason so constituted, that they neces-

sarily give rise to many absolute conceptions which could never have been derived simply from the intimations of our senses. To the just and elegant observations of Shaftesbury upon ethical questions the subsequent speculations of Butler and others were not a little indebted; his were the germs of thought, which they more fully expanded.

Wollaston, the acute author of the "Religion of Nature Delineated," must also be regarded as an opponent of Locke's fundamental principles. The ground he takes in his ethical system, namely, that virtue consists in acting according to the *truth of things*, is a sufficient proof that he regarded some conceptions as absolutely necessary, and as originating in the very constitution of man's rational nature.

The great metaphysician, however, of this period, and unquestionably one of the first which our country has produced, was Dr. Samuel Clarke. He came upon the stage just in the very heat of the controversy, which arose soon after the death of Locke, respecting the philosophical and especially the moral principles which that great thinker had advocated, and opposed himself to the sceptics, who were driving these principles to excess, with a determined power of argumentation very rarely to be found even amongst philosophers themselves. There were three points upon which Clarke more especially bent the whole of his mental energy; in all of which he showed his strong opposition to

sensationalism, and his decided tendency to a rationalistic system of philosophy.

The first of these was his celebrated argument for the being of a God, as furnishing the foundation principle of natural Theology. This argument rests upon the fact, that we have certain necessary and absolute ideas such as eternity, immensity, &c., which express *attributes* or *qualities*. But every quality must have a co-existent subject to which it belongs; and therefore, he argues, there must exist a being, who possesses these attributes of infinity; that is, there must be a God. This is, in fact, no other than Spinoza's fundamental principle, only with the difference, that *he* supposes the universe to be the existence to which these qualities belong, while Clarke attributes them to an intelligent and a personal existence, to the God of Christianity. The clearness, however, with which both grasped the idea of *the infinite*, as one of the necessary conceptions of the human mind, is in either case abundantly manifest.

The second point for which Clarke is celebrated is his theory respecting the ground of morals. Here he contends that there are certain fixed relations in the universe cognizable by the human reason, and that all virtue consists in acting according to the *fitness of things*. That this theory of morals is correct, we should by no means admit, inasmuch as it leaves out altogether the emotional element in our moral nature; but still it serves us

for another illustration of the idealistic tendency by which his philosophy was characterized, and shews the advance which was making towards sound principles in morals, as well as in metaphysics.

The third point (that on which Clarke's philosophical fame chiefly rests, and to which he devoted a very considerable portion of his life) was his controversy upon liberty and necessity; a controversy in which he stood opposed to Leibnitz and Collins, and by which he endeavoured to overturn finally the fatalistic conclusions of Spinozism. Throughout this contest, the victory in which was claimed on both sides, Clarke maintained most powerfully the doctrine of Free-will, and accordingly here, also, manifested his opposition to the philosophy which tends to merge the idea of self into that of nature. Of the three fundamental conceptions, therefore, from which all philosophy springs, those of finite self, and the infinite, held in the writings of Clarke by far the most prominent place; so that we may properly regard him as the chief representative of the idealistic tendency during the age immediately succeeding Locke, as Cudworth was during the age that immediately preceded him.

The abstruse controversies which were carried on in the manner just described, between the deistical writers of the age, and the metaphysical theologians by whom they were opposed, exerted an influence

anything but favourable to the interests of religion. This arose partly from the prominence which was thus afforded to the objections of an acute scepticism ; and partly from the abstruse manner, devoid, as it appeared, of all religious *feeling*, by which those objections were answered. Hence originated several bold, and, we may add, extraordinary attempts, to remove the scene of the deistic controversy away from an arena, so remote from men's ordinary habits of thought as that upon which it had been hitherto carried on, and to concentrate it upon the more general objections that were then raised against revealed religion as a whole.

Mr. Joseph Butler, at that time a young man in the Presbyterian seminary at Tewkesbury, entered into a correspondence with Clarke upon his *a priori* argument, in which correspondence he shewed the germs of that philosophical genius which was afterwards expanded to so exalted a degree.

On joining the Episcopal Church, and becoming preacher at the Rolls, Butler summoned all his energies to arrest the progress of scepticism, by shewing that the principles both of morality and religion lay, as it were, imbedded in the very core and centre of human nature. In the first three of a course of sermons, which he published in the year 1726, he gave what is still admitted to be one of the most masterly and original analyses ever

attempted, of man's moral and social constitution. Drawing out the parallel between man, as an individual, and mankind as a whole, he shewed that as the various parts of the natural body evince a mutual dependence upon each other, just so man in society can only exist by means of certain moral relations.

The moral nature of mankind he detected with admirable acuteness, under three classes of phenomena. First, there is the principle of benevolence manifesting itself in the *affections*, and holding society together in the strong bands of mutual sympathy. Secondly, there are various passions of our nature distinct from the principle of benevolence, which go to advance the stability of social life; and, thirdly, there is the *conscience*, the principle of moral approbation and disapprobation; the great regulative power, which governs, restrains, and directs, all the affections and passions, just as the supreme authority in a civil government manages and employs the mere physical forces of the empire. According to Butler, therefore, human nature, morally considered, consists in a variety of natural instincts, sympathies, and propensions, all held together by the superintending authority of conscience;—a view of things manifestly inconsistent with a sensational philosophy, and tending most decidedly to idealism.

To carry the matter still further, the learned prelate went on to embrace the religious as well

as the moral constitution of man in his argument, and succeeded in developing the most striking *analogies* between the actual constitution and course of nature, and the truths both of natural and revealed religion. In the sermons, therefore, we have the development of man's moral constitution as fitted for society in this world; in the "Analogy" we have the development of his spiritual constitution, as fitted for perfection and immortality hereafter; the two together forming the most complete exhibition of human life and destiny upon rationalistic principles which exists in our own language. We may regard Butler, therefore, as another link in the chain of philosophers, by whom the rationalistic method has been employed for discovering or supporting truth.

So far, the idealistic tendency had kept within its proper bounds; contenting itself with reproofing the rashness of sensationalism, or controverting whatever dangerous conclusions appeared to arise from it; and had not the followers of Locke attempted to carry their empirical principles to a most vicious extreme, it is probable that no form of extreme idealism would ever have arisen. The rapid advances, however, which were made by the sensationalists towards overturning the foundations of morality and religion, suggested to Dr., afterwards Bishop Berkeley, that there must be something radically wrong in a philosophy which evolved such dangerous and pernicious consequences.

But then, where was the error to be found, and in what did it consist? It could not consist, as Berkeley supposed, in Locke's fundamental principle, *that all our knowledge consists in ideas as the immediate objects of consciousness*, since that was a principle which had never been questioned from the time when it was asserted by Plato and Aristotle, to the time when it was put into so clear a light by the great author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding." If, therefore, the lurking error was not to be found in Locke's psychological principles, it was necessary to look for it in his ontology; that is to say, in his method of transition from the inward world of ideas to the outward world of actual and material existence. Here, then, Berkeley considered that he had found the root of the whole evil which had infected the principles of human belief, and which consisted in nothing less than the false conclusion, that our inward ideas must necessarily imply some objective material existence, which they resemble, and by which they are originated. To confirm this view of the case, he exhibited with wonderful ability the indefiniteness of the ideas we have of substance, extension, &c., and proved that, in all such instances, we cannot possibly come to the knowledge of anything beyond *properties*.

In Berkeley's reasoning upon this question, we should not fail to observe, that there are two distinct conclusions he attempts to draw; the first



is, the impossibility of our ever finding *a proof* that our sensations are occasioned by objects actually material (since it is as easy for the Deity to produce them in us without such objects as with them); the other conclusion is, that matter cannot possibly exist without involving most complete absurdities. In the first of these arguments, the whole of the reasoning is confessedly uncontrollable: allow the fundamental axiom, that all our knowledge is representative, and the conclusion he draws cannot possibly be avoided. Nay, further, in whatever way we attempt to *reason* on the same question, we shall be sure to involve ourselves in some kind of absurdity—an absurdity that arises from the very endeavour to prove a primary belief, which no reasoning on one side or the other can in the slightest degree alter, much less overturn. In the other argument, however, Berkeley is by no means so successful, since he falls into the very same error which he knew so well how to expose in others. True it is, we never can *prove* the existence of a material world, but equally true it is, that we can never prove its non-existence, or shew that such an idea must necessarily involve absurdity.

That all men *practically* do, and must believe in some objective reality is certain, and to controvert one fundamental idea by arguments drawn from another, is only admitting that our intellectual nature is in conflict with itself; so that one primitive dictate of our consciousness being falsified, there

could be no shelter from a sweeping scepticism when directed against the rest.

To pursue any lengthened reflections, however, upon Berkeley's idealism,—a theory that is so well known, and that has been so thoroughly investigated in the writings of the Scotch metaphysicians, is quite unnecessary; we only request our readers to mark it as the climax of English polemical idealism, denying, as it does altogether, one of the three fundamental conceptions of the human reason, and standing forth a lasting evidence of the necessity laid upon us to search deeply into the primary elements of our knowledge, lest we should build up our system upon a partial and consequently a false foundation.

From the death of Berkeley almost to the present day, the rationalistic method of philosophising has well nigh lain dormant in this country; or if it has sometimes given some slight symptoms of a revival, they have, for the most part, only appeared in the evanescent pages of the Magazine or the Review. Almost the only writer of this school whose works are likely to form a part of our standard philosophy is Dr. Richard Price. The whole spirit, which this most acute and profound philosopher manifested in his *Ethical Disquisitions*, was decidedly rationalistic; indeed, so extensive did he make the peculiar province of reason in the whole economy of man, that he considered it possible, not only for all our moral feelings, but

for all our emotions of every kind, to be ultimately to it as their source. In his controversy with Priestley particularly, he showed how strongly he viewed the philosophical aberration of the age, and how earnestly he desired to place moral and metaphysical truth upon its deeper and truer foundation.

We ought not either to omit the mention of Dr. Jas. Harris, the learned and accomplished author of one of the most beautiful specimens of metaphysical analysis on the theory of language which exists in our language;—I mean the work entitled “Hermes.” Many are the passages which might be quoted from this author, in which he not only disavows the doctrines of sensationalism, but points out the very error in which Locke was so deeply involved in many parts of his analysis. Take the following passage as a specimen. “Though sensible objects,” he remarks, “may be the destined *medium* to awaken the dormant energies of the understanding, yet are the energies themselves no more *contained in sense* than the explosion of a cannon in the spark that gave it fire.”

With these and a few other very slight exceptions, the philosophy of Locke may be considered to have reigned supreme during the whole of the eighteenth century, and to have drawn in its train all the chief metaphysical thinkers (of whom we may cite Abraham Tucker as a fair specimen) to which that age gave origin. Dr. Price died nine years before

the commencement of the present century, so that his name brings us almost to the borders of the period at which the historical sketch allotted to this chapter is to cease, and reminds us that we have to return to the continent of Europe, in order to seek the first elements of that all-embracing idealism, for which Germany has now become celebrated throughout the world.

SECT. III.—*Third Movement.—German Idealism.*

We now come to a country in which idealism may be said to be indigenous, and where it has long borne its maturest fruits. The real source of the German idealism must be sought in the peculiar construction of the German mind; as this, however, is a point into which we have no right at present to enter, what we shall now attempt is simply to shew the circumstances by which this philosophy was first called forth, and to trace its movements up to the nineteenth century.

The great era in the philosophical history of Germany, from which all its subsequent speculations may be said to have flowed, was formed by the life and writings of Leibnitz. Although we possess no systematic development of his opinions, (since he was too much mingled up with all the learning of Europe to devote himself closely to the expansion of any one particular branch,) yet it is not difficult

to trace in the occasional and what we may almost term fugitive productions of that vast and all-comprehending mind, the fruitful germs of those philosophical opinions, which occupy so prominent a place in the metaphysical speculations of the present age. The mind of Leibnitz was cast in a gigantic mould, and made by nature to tower above the rest of the world around him. By virtue of this it was that, like all great minds, he cast his shadow before him, and gave more pregnant suggestions in some of his cursory writings, than most other men could do in the combined and systematic labour of their whole life.

One great advantage which Leibnitz possessed was, that he entered upon the study of philosophy just at the time when he could not only see the ultimate tendency of the Cartesian principles, as shewn by Malebranche and Spinoza, but could also compare with them the vigorous efforts which Locke had made in the opposite direction. His mind was thus nurtured and expanded in the very heat of the controversy, and feeling assured as he did that truth and error existed on both sides, he came forward as the mediator between the contending parties, and proposed to shew, where on either hand mistaken principles had been advocated, and how the controversy might terminate in the discovery of the truth. It will greatly facilitate, therefore, our estimate of this philosophy, if we first of all exhibit the chief points in which Leibnitz differed from

Locke on the one hand, and Descartes on the other, and thus define the position which he assumed between them both.

This position may be easily determined. In opposition to the former, Leibnitz wrote a work entitled "Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain," the chief object of which was, to controvert Locke's view respecting innate ideas, and to prove the existence of a principle of human knowledge, independent of and superior to that which is afforded by the senses. In doing this, he by no means ran into the opposite extreme, which was held by the Cartesians, perceiving as he did most clearly that their doctrine of innate ideas was altogether untenable, and that it had been exploded indeed by the English philosopher; but while he avoided this error on the one side, he succeeded in seizing upon the very point in which Locke on the other side was most vulnerable. There is nothing in the understanding, says Locke, which did not first pass through the senses, according to the old axiom,—"*nil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu.*" True, replies Leibnitz, but there is the *understanding itself*, there is the innate faculty of forming ideas, which was altogether overlooked by Locke in his reasoning, and which stands quite independent of sensation. From the one consideration, then, that the understanding itself is innate, though our ideas are not, he goes on to reason, that there are, both in mathematics and in philosophy,

necessary truths, whose certainty does not spring from experience, but which have their foundation originally in the thinking soul. These truths he regarded as the primary sources or elements of human knowledge ; so that his starting point in philosophy was not, as with Locke, the simple unresolvable product of our sensational faculty, but the simple and unresolvable product of the understanding. While Locke, therefore, grounded everything ultimately upon experience, and thus formed a system of empiricism, Leibnitz took as his groundwork the necessary laws of the understanding, and consequently gave rise to a system of philosophical rationalism.

Far, however, as the philosophy of Leibnitz differed from that of our great English metaphysician, it stood at an equal distance from that of Descartes. It will perhaps be remembered, that the tendency of Cartesianism from the very first was to place in undue prominence the idea of the infinite or absolute, and to cast proportionally into the shade those of finite nature and finite self. Malebranche went so far as to deny secondary causes altogether, thus confining all real activity to the Supreme Being ; while Spinoza completely absorbed all finite existence in the infinite, and made everything that is, but a part and a modification of the one unchangeable substance. Leibnitz observing that the inevitable tendency of these principles was entirely to destroy the idea of *Cause*, to banish all activity

from the universe of created things, and make all phenomena but modes of the one infinite and unalterable existence, saw that he must go back, and reconsider the very notion of substance itself, if he would discover the source of the error, and successfully counteract it. The great aim of his philosophy, therefore, was to demonstrate, that all substance is necessarily *active*. In this way he thought to vindicate for the notion of causality, which the Cartesians had well nigh lost sight of, its legitimate influence. "The capital error of the Cartesians," he remarks, "is, that they have placed the whole essence of matter in extension and impenetrability, imagining that bodies can be in absolute repose: *we* shall shew that one substance cannot receive from any other the power of acting, but that the whole force is pre-existent in itself." This is in fact the key to the whole of Leibnitz's metaphysics, and from this one doctrine, as we shall see, originates every peculiarity by which his system has been distinguished.

As the system of Leibnitz is of importance, not so much, indeed, on its own account, as on account of its results, we shall endeavour to give as clear a view of its principal features as is compatible with the brevity at which, in the whole of this historical sketch, we are aiming. He set out, then, as we have just seen, from the necessary laws of the human understanding, and maintained that all philosophical truth must arise from the analysis



of the primary ideas which they involve. But, then, what is the proper criterion of truth, and how are we in our analysis to distinguish the true ideas from the false? The Cartesian criteria, those of clearness and distinctness, he considered to be imperfect, and proposed in their stead the principle of *identity*, and *contradiction* as the criterion in necessary matter, and the principle of *sufficient reason* in contingent matter. By the first of these principles we are to test all those ideas which arise from the necessary laws of thought, such as the abstract conceptions of pure mathematics, ideas which, to be false, must contradict our reason itself; while all other ideas of contingent things, such as our perceptions of the material world around us, must derive their certainty from the principle of sufficient reason. So far respecting the criteria of truth: next he proceeds to the analysis of things themselves.

Everything comes to our consciousness in its compound form; this supposes parts of composition which ultimately become indivisible, and are reduced to what we term atoms. These atoms, being indivisible, must be unextended, and therefore no real change can ever be produced in them from without, and, being indissoluble, can they never perish. They are, in fact, to all outward influences completely insensible; they are neither accessible to mere force, nor can they have any images or ideas ever impressed upon them. Nevertheless,

changes *do* perpetually take place in them, of which we are perfectly cognisant, and for which we must assign some sufficient cause. The cause, then, not being external, must be internal: that is, *these atoms* (or monads, as Leibnitz terms them, to distinguish them from the inert atoms of Democritus) *must contain an inward energy, by virtue of which they develop themselves spontaneously.*

We must not suppose, however, that all monads are alike; this would imply a contradiction, since no two things can exist which are in every respect the same without coinciding with each other, and destroying their respective identity. Each monad, therefore, has its own inward attributes, according to which its being is developed. Some are in a state of stupor, as those which compose material objects, possessing, it is true, an undeveloped power of perception, but manifesting only what are termed physical qualities; while others are raised to a complete state of apperception or consciousness, forming the souls of men, when that consciousness is clear and distinct, but the souls of animals when it is indistinct. God is the absolute, the original monad, from which all the rest have their origin, and the existence of whom we are necessitated by the very laws of our being to admit. These monads, although they have a general connexion in the whole economy of the universe, yet have no direct and individual influence upon one another; on the contrary, they all contain

within them the means of their own development, and each one in itself is a microcosm comprehending a living image of the whole universe.

This brings us to another doctrine of Leibnitz's philosophy, namely, that of pre-established harmony. The dualism of Descartes was now, by the system of monadology, rendered unnecessary, since mind and matter were reduced to the same essence,—the former being represented by conscious, and the latter by unconscious atoms. But, as all these monads contain their own native energy and principle of development within themselves, it is clear that there can be no direct influence of mind and matter upon each other. To explain this, Leibnitz had recourse to the original constitution of things as perfected by God himself; who, he maintained, has so harmonized all the monads of which the universe consists, that they shall work in complete unison, and bring out at last the great end for which they were intended. Body and soul, therefore, are like two clocks that perfectly keep time with one another, the one of which ever points to the hour, while the other strikes it.

From these principles very naturally flowed the system of optimism, which Leibnitz has supported with great ingenuity in his work, entitled "Theodicea," and according to which he shows that God has brought into actual being the best possible order of things. Hence, again, his theory of

metaphysical evil, as consisting simply in limitation; of physical evil, as the result of this limitation; and of moral evil, as being permitted for the sake of a greater ultimate good. Hence, lastly, his support of the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as being the only kind of liberty which is consistent with the pre-established order of the universe. In the view, therefore, which Leibnitz took of the innate faculties of the human mind, as opposed to the empiricism of Locke; in his dynamical theory of matter, making it ultimately homogeneous with spirit; in his denial of the mutual influence of the soul and the body, thus destroying, to say the least, the necessity of the latter in accounting for our mental phenomena; in all this we see the fruitful seeds of idealism, which only needed to be cast into a congenial soil, to expand into a complete and imposing system. Such a soil Germany afforded, and such a system has now long ceased to be a novelty in the philosophical world.

The effect which the writings of Leibnitz produced, was felt more or less throughout Europe, but especially in his own country. In Germany he soon numbered many partizans and many opponents, and the disputes which were thus originated upon some of the most fundamental principles of philosophy, giving, as they did, so great a spur to the cultivation of metaphysical literature, laid the basis for the future eminence which it there attained. There was one thing,

however, which considerably impeded the progress of Leibnitz's philosophy, namely, its want of a clear, logical and systematic form. This deficiency was supplied by Christian Wolf, who, about the commencement of the eighteenth century, came forth as one of his professed disciples.

With but little depth and originality, Wolf possessed a clear methodical mind, considerable power of analysis, and an almost incredible industry, by means of which qualifications he brought the principles of his master, that were left scattered throughout his miscellaneous writings, into a complete systematic form. The doctrine of monads, however, as propounded by Leibnitz, he considerably modified, rejecting altogether the idea, that the lower order of monads have any undeveloped power of perception, and making thus a very decided difference between matter and mind in their real essence. Moreover, instead of viewing the theory of pre-established harmony in its *universal* bearings, he confined it to the mutual influence of the soul and the body; but, with the exception of these alterations, he contented himself with methodizing the philosophy of which he professed to be a disciple, by the strict application of mathematical forms; and having done this, he offered to the world for the first time a complete *encyclopædia of philosophical science*.

As the division of Wolf has been much followed, it may be useful to indicate its nature. The whole

province of philosophy he divides into two parts, theoretical and practical. The former contains logic, properly so called, and metaphysics; metaphysics being again subdivided into ontology, psychology, cosmology, and natural theology. The practical side contains—first, ethics, as the foundation of moral distinctions; next, the law of nature; and thirdly, politics. The philosophy of Wolf, by virtue of its order and completeness, obtained great approval, and found its way into most of the German universities, where for the former half of the eighteenth century it held the pre-eminence over all other systems.

Notwithstanding this, however, it possessed inherent faults, and contained the sure seeds of a rapid decay. The errors of the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school are summed up by Tennemann in one comprehensive sentence, which I shall quote as being the judgment of a man most competent to give it. "These errors consist," he says, "in the fact, that Wolf assumed bare thinking as his starting point, overlooked the difference between the formal and the material conditions of thought, considered philosophy as the science of the possible in so far as it is possible, made the principle of contradiction the highest principle of human knowledge, placed mere ideas and verbal definitions at the very head of all research, made no difference between rational and experimental knowledge, and, though following the geometrical method, neglected to distinguish

that which is peculiar to mathematics on the one hand and philosophy on the other, both in their form and their matter." That such a philosophy must necessarily tend to a system of formal dogmatism, is a thing at once self-evident; it was, in fact, the empty pedantry which as such it assumed, that laid the foundation for its overthrow after half-a century's brilliant success.

There were several minor causes that concurred to hasten the downfall of the Wolfian metaphysics. One of the principal of these was the introduction of the philosophy of Locke, chiefly through the influence of the French literati who frequented the court of Frederick the Great: a philosophy which presented so striking a contrast to the empty definitions and verbal abstractions by which the Wolfian system was characterised. The popularity which was aimed at by these disciples of the English philosopher greatly aided the propagation of their principles, and there arose from the struggles of the two systems a species of eclecticism, which, while it hovered between the different schools mingling together often the most discordant elements, favoured a shallow and flimsy elegance rather than a scientific depth and accuracy. In the midst of this confusion, scepticism, as might be expected, also made its appearance, and the celebrated divine, M. de Beausobre, whom we may regard as its best representative, wrote an ingenious work, in which he advocated

almost an undisguised Pyrrhonism, and made the Wolfian philosophy an especial object of his attack and ridicule. It was just at this time while dogmatism, eclecticism, and scepticism were thus mingling all philosophical principles together in confusion, and were beginning to render the whole science an object of contempt, that one of the greatest thinkers which any age ever produced came forward, boldly essaying to introduce a new spirit into the degenerate philosophy of his day, and to place upon an entirely new ground the whole method of metaphysical investigation. It is needless to say that I refer to Immanuel Kant, the great author of the "CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY."

In giving an account of the labours of Kant I have had some difficulty to determine whether I should employ his strange uncouth phraseology, and endeavour to explain it by defining the terms as they occur, or whether I should endeavour to strip the thoughts of their ungainly dress and present them to the reader in a more simple and intelligible form. The latter mode appears to me, upon the whole, more suited to a brief sketch like the present; and to assist the reader who may wish to pursue his investigations further, we shall indicate parenthetically here and there the Kantian expression for some of the more important ideas.

It is a fact worthy of observation, that Kant, although he came from the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school, yet started on the same principle, and with



the same object before him as Locke did. Locke's avowed purpose was to investigate the powers and limits of the human understanding ; the purpose of the Critical Philosophy, as its name imports, was substantially the very same, that is, to search into the origin of our ideas, and to define the proper boundaries of human knowledge. In a word, Kant sought to correct and to complete whatever ~~he~~ considered deficient or mistaken in Locke's previous researches. Both these great men, therefore, on one, and that a fundamental point, thought exactly alike ; they thought, namely, that it was worse than useless to set up a determinate or dogmatical system of philosophy, before the mind itself was properly examined, its faculties criticised, its capacities determined, and the possibility of metaphysical science *generally* clearly proved. (This is termed by Kant, Kritik, whence the term critical philosophy.)

To this course Kant appears to have been incited by the sceptical writings of Hume, which he clearly saw would undermine the whole mass of human knowledge, unless a deeper and sounder foundation were laid for it, than the empiricism of the sensationalist school afforded. To lay this foundation was the direct object of the "Critique of Pure Reason," (Kritik reiner Vernunft) which we may explain as *a critical research instituted by means of our pure reason into the whole intellectual (cognitive) faculty of man.*

What then is required (for such is the primary question to be answered) in order to come to a clear understanding respecting the nature and certainty of our knowledge? That we have a *consciousness*, and that thoughts, perceptions, notions (whatever be the name by which we choose to designate such phenomena), exist there, it were mere folly and useless verbiage to doubt. These inward phenomena, moreover, are not all alike; we are conscious of most decided differences existing among them; some of them (as those, for example, derived from sensation) appear altogether contingent; they either may be or may not be in the mind, according to circumstances; while others appear steady, abiding, and constant, and are therefore termed *à priori conceptions*, as neither depending upon outward experience nor varying with it. What we require, then, as a first step to real knowledge is a science which shall investigate all the primary phenomena of our consciousness, and by that means determine the possibility, the value, and the extent of such *à priori* intuitions. Upon the possibility and validity of these, the possibility and the value of scientific knowledge must depend. If we can attain no further than to the knowledge of particular and transient phenomena, all philosophy is out of the question; the very first condition of its existence arises from the possession of abstract and unalterable ideas.

Now if we look closely into the *à priori* notions,

which we distinguish from mere empirical ones by the double criteria of universality and necessity, we find that they are of two different kinds, originating in two different methods which we possess of framing our judgments. First, a judgment may be simply a declaration of something necessarily belonging to a given notion, as, for example, that every triangle has three sides. (Analytic judgments.) In this case, the predicate is declared of the subject by virtue of an identity in the terms of the question, and to suppose the judgment not true would imply an absolute contradiction, since that judgment is in fact nothing but an analysis of the contents of the notion. But, secondly, a judgment may be a declaration of something which does not *actually* belong to a notion, but which our minds are led by some kind of evidence or other to attribute to it. (Synthetic judgments). In this case there is no identity between the subject and the predicate, but the latter expresses something respecting the former which, instead of being a mere analysis of its meaning, indicates an actual increase of our knowledge concerning it, on which account such judgments were termed by Kant *amplificatory*, as *adding* something to our former ideas on the question.

These synthetic judgments may be either *à posteriori* or *à priori* ones. Of the former kind are all those which rest upon our actual experience, all those decisions in every day life which are made in pursuance of the evidence of our senses. If I say "All

men are mortal," there is no identity here between the subject and predicate, but I attribute mortality to man because experience assures me of the fact being true. It is with synthetic judgments *à priori*, however, that philosophy has chiefly to do, and which consequently require a more particular explanation.

Let us select an instance or two, by way of example. First, take the proposition, every quality exists in some substance. Here we have a synthetic judgment, because substance expresses something not identical with quality, but it is also *à priori*, because the evidence of it is not empirical but purely rational. Again, to take another instance, when I say that every effect has a cause, I merely attribute to an effect what is implied in its definition, as being the latter of two given events; in fact, I do nothing more than analyze the notion. But when I say that every effect implies the notion of *power*, or that every event has an *efficient* cause, I do more than analyze the expression, I attribute altogether a fresh notion to it, and perform a judgment by which my knowledge is extended. Hume's notion of cause and effect, therefore, is simply an analytic judgment; it expresses only precedence and consequence; the opposed and truer notion which implies power as the connecting link is a synthetic judgment.

Both analytic and synthetic judgments *à priori* are found in all the pure sciences, and form indeed

the very principles upon which such sciences are pursued. The axioms, for instance, which stand at the head of mathematical reasoning are all judgments of one or other of these kinds. Thus, when I say, that "the whole is greater than a part," I merely analyze the expressions, and add nothing to my knowledge beyond what was already contained in them; but when I say that "if a straight line meeting two other straight lines make the interior angles less than two right angles, those two lines shall meet when produced," I add something to my knowledge beyond the mere definition of the terms; and I feel perfectly sure of the truth, nay, the necessity of the judgment, though it is perhaps impossible to afford any direct demonstration of it. Many other synthetic judgments of this nature might be enumerated, such as the following: God exists,—the laws of nature are constant,—all phenomena imply a subject, &c.; but those which we have adduced, we trust, are enough for illustration.

Now the question is, how do we come to such conclusions as these, which we feel to be real and undoubted truth, and which nevertheless rest upon no demonstration whatever? If I am necessitated to admit them as soon as they are presented to me, it must be because the mind is so constituted that it cannot think otherwise; unless indeed we hold the Platonic theory, that we are merely remembering what we had learned in some former life. Here then we get to the real problem that we wish to

see solved—how are synthetical judgments *à priori* possible, how do they originate, and what certainty is there in the knowledge which they afford us? This is the fundamental question upon which the very possibility of a true science of metaphysics rests, nay, by which the validity of all our necessary and universal ideas in every science is to be tried. Hume referred all these judgments to experience, making our ideas of causation, our confidence in the uniformity of nature, and so forth, merely the effects of habit or association; and by that means he struck at the root of all *necessary* truth. Reid and his school contravened the conclusions of Hume by bringing to their help the principle of “common sense,” and pointing out certain indestructible beliefs, which we must hold, and that too quite independently of any experience whatever. Kant’s object was to look still further into our intellectual being, and to discover the primary laws themselves upon which all these beliefs rest.

In doing this, it struck him, that philosophers had begun at the wrong end in analyzing the human understanding; that they had all begun, namely, by inquiring what are *the objects* of our knowledge, and then had made truth to consist in the conformity between the objective reality and the subjective state. May it not be, thought the great philosopher, that many of those things which we usually attribute to objective reality, are really the effect of our own subjective laws; may it not

be that the very qualities which we refer to external objects are infused into them by the mind itself ; in brief, may not the forms of thought which logic gives us with such an admirable precision, be the very principles by which the mind is guided in obtaining intuitions of external things, by which it moulds the crude material of the senses into knowledge, and by which it unites together all our direct perceptions into a complete system of experimental truth. If this be really the case, thought Kant, we shall be able to see much further into the constitution of the human mind than was ever seen before, and lay a much more solid foundation for the certainty of human knowledge, than had ever been accomplished by any previous philosophy. To solve this problem, then, is the great aim of Kant's united criticism of the sensitive faculty, the understanding, and the reason ; and by this solution, he thought to lay a sure basis for the whole superstructure of pure and abstract truth.

The *first* thing, then, to be done in this criticism was to determine the proper nature of the sensitive faculty by submitting it to the scrutiny of our reason, to shew what there is abiding and unchangeable in it as the necessary condition of all perception, and in this way to find out exactly what is contributed by it to the formation of our universal notions. (Transcendental *Æsthetic*.) In doing this, Kant took for granted, as a thing lying

altogether beyond the region of proof, the reality of our sense-perceptions. The capacity of our being affected by the objects of sense, just as is the case in Locke's philosophy, he never questioned, but considered it as a thing self-evident that the matter of our notions must be furnished from this source, inasmuch as our other and higher faculties are simply formal or regulative, and therefore not adapted to supply the material for any conception whatever. But then the great point to be investigated was this,—what is it in our perceptions on the one hand that must be attributed simply to experience or that comes from the thing itself, and what, on the other, that is of a purely *à priori* character originating in the necessary laws of our constitution?

To find this we must apply the criteria of universality and necessity, as the true tests of what is *à priori* in its nature; and the result is, that there are just two ideas which are necessarily and universally attached to every perception, namely, *time* and *space*. The moment we experience any perception we must place it in a given time, and in a given space; so that these two fundamental notions are the necessary forms of all sensation, and pre-exist in the soul as the laws or conditions of its very possibility. This being the case, every quality in an object that implies time and space must also be *à priori* and subjective. Thus magnitude, extension, duration, in a word, all those



which have been considered primary qualities of matter, inasmuch as they are but different modifications of time and space, are entirely subjective, and are only attributed to objects by virtue of the necessary forms of our own understanding. Abstract, therefore, from material things, all these, its time-and-space-qualities, and the remainder alone is due to experience,—a remainder which includes nothing but the bare fact of their actual existence. The outward world thus stands to us in the same relation as the little objects within a kaleidoscope do to the eye.\* As we turn the instrument round, they assume all kinds of shapes and positions, which positions, however, do not depend upon the objects that are in it, but upon the construction of the glasses by which they are reflected. That there are objects actually present, is a truth that comes at once from those objects themselves, for without their presence the kaleidoscope would offer no phenomena at all to our view ; but all the variations of them depends upon the instrument through which they are seen. Now the human understanding, says Kant, is such an instrument; the eye that gazes through it is sensation and the world of phenomena consists of such objects. The fact that they do really exist comes from themselves, and is seen by the direct intuition of the senses, but all the different forms and

\* For this striking illustration I am indebted to Chalybäus in his "Entwicklung Speculativer Philosophie."

aspects they assume are produced by our own subjective faculties or laws of thought. Thus the *now*, and the *here* of an object form the actual matter of our perceptions as derived from experience, while every thing else connected with it is subjective, and comes from ourselves.

The nature of the sensitive faculty is thus fully determined. Its province is to give us phenomena as the bare, unshaped, undetermined matter of our notions, and to fix the two different forms under which that matter shall be viewed, namely, those of time and space; but whether the matter of our notions, as thus perceived, be in the ordinary sense of the term material, or whether it be not, is left by this faculty quite undetermined. (Transcendental idealism.) The final conclusion, then, which we are directed to draw from this part of the criticism is, that we can never penetrate beyond phenomena into the real and essential nature of things, our knowledge of them being relative to the constitution of our own faculties; that, therefore, there is no ontology possible, and no metaphysics. Moreover, as to our synthetic judgments, *a priori*, it is evident that they will hold good within the bounds of actual experience, but that they are by no means applicable to those things which cannot be made objects of direct perception; for, were this the case, the sensitive faculty would not be the sole source from whence the *matter* of our knowledge is derived. On these grounds,

therefore, we may have a valid science of natural philosophy, because the objects of it are grasped by the senses; and we may also have a valid science of pure mathematics, because all the relations of time and space about which it is conversant can be submitted to the direct intuition of sense (*e. g.* by diagrams), as though they were objective realities; but on the very same grounds it is equally impossible to claim objective reality for any purely metaphysical ideas, lying, as they do, entirely beyond the boundaries of all our experience.

Such, then, is the contribution which our sensitive faculty brings to the attainment of real and definite knowledge. But, that we may trace the process further, we must proceed to the consideration of a *second* and a higher faculty, that of understanding, to which we have just referred, as giving form and figure to the material furnished by sensation. Sensation alone could never form a *notion*, inasmuch as it consists only of bare feelings, which are altogether passive, and, as far as knowledge is concerned, are *blind* and *dead*. Were we endowed only with this capacity, our minds would ever be in a chaotic state, with the elements of knowledge all mixed up there in confusion, but not a single thought isolated and shaped, and made the separate object of attention. The office, then, of giving *form* and distinctness to the material afforded by sensation is committed to the understanding (*ver-*

*stand*). Kant was led to the consideration of the necessary forms of our understanding, by the conclusions of Hume respecting causation. Instead of maintaining with Hume, that our idea of cause and effect is derived simply from experience, and, therefore, not in its nature certain and invariable, he contended that it was a universal, a necessary, and an *a priori* notion, which could not be derived from experience at all, but must be a fixed relation grounded in the very constitution of our minds, and whether absolutely true or not, must be true *to man* as long as his understanding remains as it is.

Kant perceived, however, that there are other fixed relations in the mind of man beside that of causality : he perceived, for instance, that when we contemplate the phenomena afforded by sensation, the understanding considers them according to their *quantity*, their *quality*, and their *mode* of existence, as well as their *causal dependence*, and considered it of the first importance to discover the actual number of these fixed relations, inasmuch as we should learn by this means what the forms or laws of our understanding really are. If the direct intuition of the sensitive faculty gives us the elements of our knowledge, and we can find *all* the different modes in which the understanding shapes those elements into distinct conceptions, then, it is clear, we shall have before us a complete classification of all our notions, and form a table

of categories upon sounder and more correct principles than those on which Aristotle's were founded.

Now, to determine these laws, we must observe all the different methods of *judging*, that is, of comparing the relations which exist between a subject and a predicate. To discover these is the direct office of logic, which, accordingly, shews us that there are four different connexions which may subsist between the subject and predicate in any proposition. First, the predicate may express something referring to the *quantity* of the subject; secondly, to the *quality*; thirdly, to the *relation*; and fourthly, to the *modality*, or mode of its existence. Each of these four head-categories, again, contains three subordinate ones: for if we consider the quantity of any object, we may regard it as a *unity*, *plurality*, or *totality*. If we consider the quality, we may predicate of it agreement, disagreement, or partial agreement; that is, we may regard it under the ideas of *affirmation*, or *negation*, or *limitation*. If, again, we consider the relations of an object,—we may regard its internal relations, its dependence, or its external connexion; which give us the categories of *substance*, *causality*, and *reciprocity* (*Wechselwirkung*); or lastly, if we consider its mode of existence, we may predicate of its *possibility*, *actuality*, and *necessity*.

These, then, are the laws with which reason has furnished the understanding for framing its notions.

As soon as intuition gives us phenomena, this our active and constructive faculty examines them with respect to the four general heads we have mentioned, and requires under each head one out of the three possible answers that might be returned. When this is accomplished, the notion is put into shape, and its quantity, quality, relation, and mode of existence is definitely fixed.

From this criticism of the understanding Kant draws several inferences. He infers, for example, that the truth of any notion does not depend, as Locke asserts, upon the conformity of our *idea* of it with the outward reality, but upon the validity of these subjective laws. If my conception of an outward object, such as a tree or a mountain, be constructed (with the exception of the bare fact of its existence), by the subjective principles of my intelligence, then, for the truth of the conception, we must appeal to the validity of the principles in question. Again, he infers, as before, that our real knowledge cannot go beyond our experience, since the understanding is simply formal or constructive, and cannot be a source of truth. And still further, he shews, again, from this the possibility of a perfect science of physics, inasmuch as the matter of it all comes within the bounds of experience; nay, further, that as the qualities we attribute to outward objects are derived from our own minds, the science of logic must exactly correspond with that of physics, and

the laws of the one answer to the laws of the other. (Transcendental logic.)

We have thus shewn the province of the sensitive faculty as affording the *matter* of a notion, and the province of the understanding as affording the *form*; but then we might ask,—How do these two faculties communicate, and how is the understanding justified in applying its subjective laws to objective or sensible phenomena? This is effected by a mediating representation, which has an affinity to the matter on the one hand, the form on the other; and by means of which the formal notion and the outward phenomenon become united. This mediating representation is *time*, which Kant calls the schema of our notions, and by the aid of which we regard the general forms of the understanding as having relation to something objective, concrete, and actually present. The process of schematizing our notions, he shews, is performed chiefly by the imagination, which combines the two elements, those of matter and form, into one whole; and thus gives rise to the intellectual principles by which the valid exercise of the understanding is regulated. The whole process, therefore, by which we frame a general notion is now complete; we have the matter from experience; the form from the understanding; and then the two are united by the imagination and by means of the mediating schema of time, so as to make the abstract categories applicable to the uses

of actual life. Such is the criticism of the understanding (transcendental analytic); we now proceed to the criticism of the pure reason. (Transcendental dialectic.) —

Pure reason is the highest faculty in man, because it is that which regulates the rest, and which seeks to bring unity and connexion into all the results of the understanding. The understanding can only form a *judgment*, but reason can combine two judgments by a middle term, and draw from them a general conclusion. The constant aim of the reasoning faculty is evidently to *generalize*, and by that means to strive after absolute unity. If I say, man is immortal, I pass a simple *judgment* upon him: but my reason prompts me to ask why this judgment is correct; and to answer such inquiry, it constructs an argument or syllogism of this kind—All spirit is immortal, man is a spirit, therefore man is immortal: in which argument we have grounded our first judgment (that man is mortal), upon a higher and more general principle, the immortality of spirit. This process, if carried on, aims, it is evident, at the final, the absolute, the unconditioned in human knowledge.

To find out the forms of our reasoning faculty, we must proceed in the same way as we did with the understanding, that is, we must consult the science of logic, and see in how many ways we may combine judgments into a conclusion. Now logic points out to us three modes by which this may be



accomplished; for we can employ for this purpose the categorical syllogism, the hypothetical, or the disjunctive, all three of which seek the same end by different methods. In the categorical we seek to generalize by means of the relation of substance and accident, at each step rejecting some of the accidents and attaining a more universal subject. In the hypothetical, we generalize by means of the relation of ground and consequence indicated by our always employing the form "if." And, lastly, in the disjunctive we generalize by the relation of parts and a whole. In the first case we proceed forwards till we arrive at the absolute subject, which is *the soul*; in the second, we seek the absolute union and dependence of every single thing in a whole, that is, *the universe*—the totality of all phenomena; and in the third case we seek the absolute idea of all possibility, namely, the *all-perfect Being*, who possesses every possible perfection, and excludes every possible negation.

That which results from the exercise of our understanding, as we have before explained it, Kant calls notions (*begriffe*), but that which results from the exercise of the reason he terms ideas (*ideen* or *noumena*), and it was the clear apprehension of the difference between these two, which Kant considered as one of the greatest services he had rendered to philosophy. Notions are derived primarily from experience, and therefore may ever be referred back to experience; they are within the limits of

our real perceptive knowledge, and therefore may be ever employed in the construction of a true science. Mathematics, for example, will evidently form a true science, because all the relations of number and space can be schematized and viewed by a direct perception; and physics too will form a true science, because the objects of *it* likewise are known perceptively; but the case is altogether different when we pass from the region of notions to that of ideas. Ideas have not their basis in perception, they are the pure creations of the reason, and can never be supposed real without giving rise to perpetual absurdity and contradiction. In fact, the forms and categories of the pure reason are only intended to *regulate* the use of the understanding, and enable it to generalize its judgments; never can they be allowed to make good any kind of objective knowledge whatever.

Notwithstanding this, however, pure reason by virtue of its constitution ever aims at the realization of our supersensual ideas, and strives to make them the signs of actually existing objects, thus giving rise to a science of pure metaphysics under the three corresponding heads of *Psychology*, or the doctrine of the soul; of *Cosmology*, or the doctrine of the universe; and of *Theology*, or the doctrine respecting God.

To prove that these ideas of pure metaphysics are simply formal, and cannot be used as possessing any objective reality, or be logically deduced, Kant

goes into a long discussion, in which he shews the fallacies to which such a use of them always gives rise. The conclusion accordingly is, that the real existence and consequent immortality of the soul can neither be proved nor disproved *scientifically*, and that the attempt to do so is sure to be fraught with absurdity (paralogisms of pure reason); that the origin and nature of the universe can never be demonstrated (antinomies of pure reason); and, thirdly, that none of the arguments, whether ontological, or cosmological, *à priori*, or *à posteriori*, for the being of a God can ever *prove* their point, nor any arguments ever prove to the contrary. (Ideal of pure reason.) Hence the criticism of pure reason cuts at the very root of all scepticism on such matters, and shews that these supersensuous ideas, if not demonstrable, nevertheless are most assuredly *possible*; and hence too Kant confirmed his former conclusion, that scientific knowledge is confined to the world of experience, and that the only true metaphysics are the metaphysics of nature. Such, then, are the rigid conclusions to which Kant arrived, concerning the speculative reason of man—conclusions by which he hoped to place every future system of philosophy upon a correct foundation.

But now the best, the most satisfactory, and by far the most useful part of the Kantian philosophy is to come, that, namely, in which he sets aside the results of speculative reason by those of the *practical* reason. The immortality of the soul, the freedom

of the will, the existence of God, and all such supersensual ideas cannot, it is true, be demonstrated ; but, says Kant, our reason has not only a speculative movement, it has also a practical movement, by which it regulates the *conduct* of man, and does this with such a lofty bearing and such an irresistible authority that it is impossible for any rational being to deny its dictates. (Categorical imperative.) Ideas, therefore, which in theory cannot hold good, in practice are seen to have a reality because they become the cause of human actions, an effect which could never take place if there were not some real existence to produce it.

That man has indisputably a moral nature, and that he is imperatively commanded to act according to it, no good man will deny. But what does this moral nature and this command to action imply? Manifestly it implies the freedom of the will, for otherwise action on moral principles is impossible; it implies also the existence of God, otherwise there were a law without a lawgiver; and it implies, lastly, a future state as the goal to which all human actions tend. In this part of his philosophy, therefore, Kant rendered good service to the true interests of morality; neither can we too much admire the force with which he repels all the low, selfish, and utilitarian grounds of morality, basing it all upon the categorical imperative, the authoritative voice of the great Lawgiver of the universe, as its everlasting foundation. It is true that all these

matters lie beyond the region of actual science, but nevertheless they are within the bounds of a rational faith (*vernunft-glaube*), the dictates of which every good, virtuous, and religious mind will readily admit.

Between the theoretical and the practical movement, however, there is a third division of philosophy which Kant terms, "The Criticism of the Judging Faculty" (*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*). The object of this faculty (which lies at the ground-work of all our notions of beauty, of perfection, and of design as exhibited in the universe), is to make our pure and rational ideas objects of direct perception, as is done, for example, to a great extent in the fine arts, where our inward ideal of the sublime and beautiful is transferred to the marble or the canvass. The great benefit of this faculty arises from its connecting in our minds the theoretical with the practical, from its giving us lofty emotions as the result of our perception of the design everywhere manifested in organized nature, and the consequent notion which it imparts of a final end to which the whole universe is tending (*Teleologie*). In this way our æsthetic sentiments confirm the belief of the practical reason in immortality and God, and make the real conclusion of the whole system as assertative of the great fundamentals of morality and natural religion, as could possibly be attained to without an actual demonstration.

Such are some of the main principles of the

Kantian metaphysics; much we have necessarily omitted, but from what we have here advanced, a correct idea may be formed of their nature and tendencies, and some estimate made of the prodigious expenditure of thought by which the whole superstructure was created.

The writings of Kant form incomparably the greatest era in modern philosophy, and the results of them have become insensibly incorporated more or less into all our metaphysical thinking. The chief services he rendered to the cause of speculative philosophy are the following. In the analysis of perception, he separated with great clearness the subjective element from the objective, explaining more fully than had ever been done before, the great fundamental distinction existing between the matter of our ideas and the form. In the analysis of the understanding, he afforded a new, and in many respects, an admirable classification of the logical processes of thought, tracing them all to the ground-principles of our intellectual being, and shewing the subjective validity of our primitive judgments. Thirdly, he pointed out the existence of a higher faculty in man, that of pure reason, by means of which we rise from the finite notions which lie within the limits of our experience, to those lofty and supersensual ideas which link us to the infinite and eternal.

But the greatest service which Kant rendered to the interests of truth, was that of silencing, by

his practical philosophy, all the cavils of scepticism against the fundamentals of morality and of natural religion, and placing them both upon a basis altogether beyond the influence of any ordinary argumentation. If we add to this the clear and broad light in which he placed the chief problems of metaphysical inquiry, and the truly scientific spirit he infused into those investigations, we shall become sensible how much all future ages will be indebted to this great thinker for the position he occupied in the history and progress of philosophy.

We must now, however, in few words, shew the chief points in which his philosophy is most vulnerable, and thence exhibit the part it took in building up a complete system of idealism. The first objection, which would naturally strike one on first becoming acquainted with the critical philosophy, is the total want of connexion between the theoretical and the practical side of it. Conclusions the most important, and most rigid, are adduced by the criticism of the speculative reason, which must all be forgotten the moment we have to do with the *practical*. It is evident that there is here a want of unity, that the ground on which the system rests is shifted, and that many a mind which had been convinced on the first and scientific ground, might hesitate to receive opposite conclusions that rest upon the second ground, and that not a scientific one at all, but only an undemonstrable belief.

Another objection might be raised against the extent to which Kant pushed his theory of time and space, and against his doctrine of man's sensational faculty generally. In making time and space purely subjective, and regarding all the time and space qualities of the external world as purely subjective also, he attributed far too much to the inward law, and far too little to the outward fact. When we consider that Kant regarded both the understanding and the reason as simply formal and regulative principles, that he admitted sensation alone as capable of affording any of the *material* of our thoughts, and when we unite with this the extreme attenuation of the objective element even in sensation itself, we at once become conscious how near he treads upon the verge of pure idealism. The younger Fichte remarks, upon this point, somewhat severely, as follows,—“That which belongs to time and space on the one hand, is (according to Kant) bare phenomenon or appearance, behind which the real thing hides itself; neither, on the other hand, have the ideas of the pure reason anything but a negative import; and so this philosophy, both in its lower and higher movement, remains entirely empty of all reality; it is a theory wisely founded indeed, and admirable in its original plan, but on account of one error (that respecting time and space) in the outset, and the logical consequences of it in the execution, it



sinks at last into an enormous deficit, and ends in a palpable contradiction."

But one of the weightiest objections against the Kantian doctrines we conceive to be the fact, that he makes reason, with all its conclusions, purely subjective and personal. The categories with him are simply subjective laws, while the supersensual ideas or noumena, which the reason forms, are nought but regulative principles, and can point us to no real existence, inasmuch as we have no right to transport them out of ourselves and make them signs of objective reality. Truth may, therefore, ever be truth, so long as our minds remain as they are, but as we can never get beyond the bounds of our own subjectivity, we are not at liberty to affirm that any conclusion of our reason is "*per se*" eternally true, or that there is such a thing as abstract truth at all, outside the limits of our own direct consciousness. In all these various points, we recognise principles which tend inevitably to a subjective idealism. The idea of nature, it is true, is not destroyed, but it is contracted to the narrowest possible limits;—the idea of God, or the absolute, is banished altogether from the region of strict philosophy, and made to rest only upon a lower kind of belief; the reason, that emanation from heaven, that portion of eternal truth that is granted by the Infinite mind to the finite, is turned into a personal and regulative law, while, on the

other hand, the subjective ME, if it does not actually create matter, yet gives it all its attributes, includes as part of itself all the categories from which the laws of nature, as perceived by us, originate, and possesses the idea of God, in such a manner, as simply to imply an inward principle, not at all as indicating an outward fact. The tendencies of these doctrines, however, will be better seen by a manifestation of their actual results, to which point we must now briefly advert.\*

For some few years after the publication of the "Critique of Pure Reason" in 1781, it excited but little attention, owing, probably, in great measure, to the difficulty and the novelty of the verbiage that was employed in it. No sooner, however, did its real merits begin to appear, than it took the most extraordinary hold on the public mind, won its way into all the universities, and made a complete conquest over the other dogmatical and eclectic systems, which had been in vogue before its appearance. This conquest, it may easily be imagined, was not gained without a hard struggle,—in fact, never, during the history of philosophy, have so many acute thinkers sprung forth at once into the field, as under the first excitement of the Kantian metaphysics. Many there were, who ranged themselves on the side of Kant, and sought by all means to establish and confirm his main principles; others, again, there were who attacked them, part of whom belonged to the Wolfian

\* *Vide* Note A. Appendix.

school, and part (as, for example, Weisshaupt, Tittel, and Tiedeman) rather to that of Locke. There arose, also, as usual, from the contest, some bold manifestations on the side of scepticism and mysticism, of which we can at present say nothing, but which will be further noticed in their place.

Whilst, however, this combat was going on, there appeared a few superior thinkers, who sought to perfect the Kantian theory, by supplying its deficiencies and simplifying its foundation. The most distinguished of these was Carl Leonhard Reinhold, who suggested an idea, which, though it did not meet with immediate approbation, has since become one of the most fruitful germs of philosophical speculation. Perceiving that Kant, in common with Locke, had taken for granted the reality of our sense perceptions as they exist in our own consciousness, and made no inquiry into the scientific ground of them, he fixed his mind upon the one great idea of *the consciousness itself*, and sought to supply, what Kant had entirely omitted, a correct theory concerning it.

Kant, he conceived, had probed to its very foundation the whole cognitive or knowing faculty of man, but nothing more; what he now sought to add, was a criticism of the representational or perceptive faculty, and thus to shew what is implied in the process which we term perception. In this process, he contended, we are conscious of three things—the perceiving mind, the thing per-

ceived, and the perception itself, which goes between them, and exists only as the result of the union of the other two elements. The appeal which Reinhold thus made to our immediate consciousness as the very first and surest ground from which we can start, and the relation which he sought to establish between what is subjective and what is objective in it, though it was all intended to complete the Kantian system, yet gave the first hint at a great principle, which soon shewed itself altogether opposed to the critical philosophy, and became the foundation of that peculiar method of metaphysical research, which will hereafter claim much of our attention in considering the more modern idealism of Germany. Reinhold himself, it is true, after a time, gave up his own theory, but he only forsook it to adopt that of Fichte, to whose system, in fact, he had himself not a little contributed.

In closing this sketch of the German idealistic tendency, let us look for a moment at the steps through which it has past, and at the point to which it has arrived. Leibnitz, the great founder, gave it its first rationalistic direction, and set the example of a bold speculation upon matters, which lie beyond the ordinary range of philosophical investigation. Wolf systematized the different theories which Leibnitz had proposed, and afforded a complete classification of the objects of metaphysical research. Kant next arose from the Leibnitzian-Wolfian

school, and laid a new foundation for philosophy, upon the twofold ground of the *pure* and the *practical* reason, making scientific knowledge almost entirely subjective. Reinhold next endeavoured to unite these two fundamental principles into one, by appealing to the human consciousness as the ultimate basis of both. It needed but one more effort to close the door upon all objective philosophy ; to prevent any scientific transition from our own consciousness to the world without ; to make *the Me* at once the foundation and the author of all our knowledge ; and so to complete that superstructure of subjective idealism which was already so vigorously commenced. This last step, though it was taken within the limits of the eighteenth century, yet, in all its important results, belongs to the nineteenth, and its consideration must, therefore, be reserved until we come to the philosophical *characteristics* of the present age.

#### SECT. IV.—*Scottish Philosophy.*

After the review we have thus taken of the busy scene, that was transacted on the soil of Germany during the closing period of the seventeenth, and throughout the whole of the eighteenth centuries, we now return to our own country, where we have to mark the origin and progress of a school of philosophy, which,

though by no means imposing in its appearance, or bold in its speculations, has produced valuable results in the department both of metaphysics and morals, and borne the fruits of much sound and healthy thinking. We arrange the philosophy of Scotland, to which we now allude, under the present chapter, not because it ever trod at all closely upon the borders of pure idealism, or is ever likely to do so, (since, indeed, it has been one of its most successful combatants); but because its tendency has ever been to repress the advancing sensationalism of the followers of Locke, and to point to some ultimate principles or laws of thought, which exist in the mind, altogether distinct from its connexion with the material world.

It was Francis Hutcheson (born in Ireland, in the year 1694) who had the merit of reviving in Scotland the cultivation of speculative philosophy, after a slumber of many centuries. His principles appear, in common with most metaphysical thinkers of his day, to have been originally founded upon the philosophy of Locke; and he never, indeed, can be said to have departed very widely from them during his whole life. Notwithstanding this, however, he left behind in his writings many sentiments which, when matured and expanded, were certain to stand in direct opposition to the increasing materialism of the school, to which he professedly belonged.

His first work was an "Enquiry into the Original

of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue," in which he maintains, that, in addition to the five external senses (to which Locke attributes *primarily* the origin of all our ideas) we possess also two internal senses, one of which gives rise to the various emotions of beauty and sublimity, introducing us thus into the province of æsthetics, while the other gives rise to the moral feelings. This supposition of internal *senses*, although it kept up the language of sensationalism, was evidently equivalent to the adoption of a new, and that an inward source of ideas, and thus formed the first step which was taken by the Scotch philosophy towards a sounder theory of human knowledge. In his metaphysics (*Synopsis Metaphysica Ontologiam et Pneumatologiam continens*) he shews similar signs of a revolt from the authority of Locke, by maintaining the existence of certain metaphysical axioms, which are derived, not from experience, but from the connate power of the understanding. (*Menti congenita intelligendi vis.*) It is abundantly evident, therefore, that this acute, honest, and elegant writer perceived the existence of certain elements in human thought, that cannot in any true sense be termed experimental; and, although he did not reduce his views to a distinct and systematic form, yet he turned the attention of his successors to the weak side of the current philosophy, and struck out the first idea of a better and a more satisfactory system.

It was during the early period of Hutchinson's career, that Scotland gave birth to two minds of a very different order indeed, but both destined to acquire a European reputation, and to exert a very considerable influence upon their age. David Hume was born in the year 1711, and although he is by no means to be classed either with the Scotch or English school of philosophy, yet we mention his name, in passing, as belonging to this period, inasmuch as the succeeding progress of speculative philosophy in Scotland, as well as in some other countries, was in no small degree owing to his writings.

Leaving, then, with this bare mention, the further consideration of Hume's sceptical principles to the next chapter, we go on to the other author to whom we have just referred—namely, Adam Smith, the father of political science, who was born at Kircaldy, A.D. 1725. The reputation of this celebrated author rests chiefly upon his “Enquiry into the Wealth of Nations” (a department of science with which we have at present nothing to do); his name, however, has found a lasting place amongst purely philosophical writers from his well-known “Theory of Moral Sentiments.” Smith may be regarded as the great investigator of Man's sympathetic affections; for although it is probable, that he hardly found a single mind ready to coincide in his view of the moral sentiments as arising from this source, yet it is pretty certain, that there never was an in-



telligent reader who arose from the perusal of his work without admiring the beauty of the analysis, and being enlightened by many side-views it affords us of the complicated working of the human feelings. It is true we should not attribute to Smith the merit of taking any decisive step in speculative philosophy, or of aiding, by any direct results, its further development; but by the brightness of his genius, the elegance of his mind, and the charm of his style, he gave a very decided spur to the pursuit of philosophy generally, and filled a place in the metaphysical history of his country, which must ever be taken into consideration, if we would estimate the whole progress of that history aright.

But the coryphæus of the rising school of Scotch metaphysics was Dr. Reid, who was born at Strachan, April 26th, 1710. The philosophy of Reid is too well known in this country to need here any lengthy analysis, and we shall therefore only devote a very few pages, in order to explain the spirit in which it commenced, the principle on which it proceeded, and the results, to which we may fairly admit that it has conducted. Notwithstanding all that Dr. Brown has attempted to prove to the contrary, it must be allowed that the state of mental philosophy on the subject of perception up to the time of Reid, was, to say the least, extremely indefinite and confused. That Descartes rejected the ideal system, as propounded by Aristotle, and held by the scholastics, there can

be no doubt; but it is equally clear that he did not admit the possibility of our comprehending anything respecting material objects and their qualities, excepting so far as our perceptions, in some sense or other, resemble those qualities. That Locke held the same opinion, we have already proved, since indeed the very foundation principle of his philosophy is, that all things about which the understanding is conversant are *ideas*, and that these ideas are the subjective representatives of objective realities. The use which Berkley made of this doctrine, it is well known, was to shake our faith in the existence of the material world; and Hume, carrying his scepticism one step further, employed the very same principle to undermine the whole solid fabric of human belief, as will be shown more at large hereafter.

Reid, in his early life, had been a complete believer in this representative theory, and had leaned strongly to Berkleianism, as the natural result; but when Mr. Hume's "Treatise on Human Nature" came forth to the world, and he saw the consequences to which the whole theory must ultimately tend, he began to inquire within himself whether that theory were really a true one. This inquiry, according to his own account, he carried on perpetually for above forty years, and never could gain any affirmative evidence on the question, except the mere dictum of philosophers.

The great aim of Reid's philosophy, then, was

to investigate the true theory of perception ; to controvert the representationalist hypothesis, as held in one sense or another by almost all preceding philosophers ; and to stay the progress which scepticism, aided by this hypothesis, was so rapidly making. The course which he follows in order to accomplish this purpose is, first of all to prove that there is no possibility of our tracing the real process of sensation and perception in the human mind at all ; that the ideal system of Aristotle is, accordingly, an hypothesis totally unfounded ; and that the modification of it which we find in the philosophy of Descartes and Locke, is equally void of proof. That there exists, on the one hand, the mind—the subject which perceives, we are perfectly conscious ; and that there exists, on the other hand, the object—the thing which is perceived, we know by a similar testimony ; but that there exists any intermediate link or representation by which the two communicate, we have no evidence, either from the testimony of consciousness, or from any other kind of demonstration. In place, therefore, of attempting to account for the mutual influence of mind and matter upon one another, he points us to certain intuitive and original principles of belief, which it is impossible to doubt without incurring the charge of absurdity. When, for example, we see a house or a tree, we not only have the simple apprehension of a phenomenon by virtue of the *sensation* produced, but we are led,

by the very nature of the mind, to form certain judgments respecting it, such as—that an object really exists, that it has a certain form, and is of a given magnitude, &c., judgments which are necessarily implied in, and united to the sensation itself, and which, according to our constitution, we cannot possibly reject. These original and irresistible judgments, he maintains, are a part of the natural furniture of the understanding; they are as certain and immediate as our simple notions themselves, and altogether make up what is called "*the common-sense of mankind.*" From this phraseology the philosophy of Reid has been called the philosophy of common sense,—a term which he opposes to natural lunacy on the one hand, and to metaphysical lunacy, or pure idealism on the other.

There are few, perhaps, who would maintain that this phraseology of Reid was chosen with much taste or judgment; and it is by no means to be regretted that the subsequent writers of the same school introduced considerable alterations into its terminology.

After laying down these foundations, Reid proceeds to enumerate all the principles of common sense, that is, all our primary beliefs; controverts, by their means, the scepticism of Hume; fixes the proper boundaries of human knowledge; and ends by applying his principles to the analysis of the active powers and the moral feelings. Such is, in brief, the statement (and we believe a correct

one,) of the object and the main principles of Dr. Reid's mental philosophy. Now, in attempting to estimate the merits of Reid as a metaphysician, and the results to which he has given rise, every impartial critic, we consider, must give him credit for the truly philosophical spirit with which he commenced, and the great importance of the object which he had in view. It is difficult for us, who live in a day when the language of mental science has become so much more pure than it formerly was, to imagine the confusion of thought that was engendered by the constant use of the Aristotelian and scholastic terms respecting *ideas*, as the sole objects of human knowledge. The proper fixing of all such terms, and of the real meaning we must attach to them, is assuredly not one of the least advantages, which Dr. Reid conferred upon the philosophy of his day, and of which we are now reaping the fruits.

The great question, however, now to be considered is, whether or not Reid has completely analyzed, and placed upon their true and ultimate basis, the phenomena of perception ; and whether he has scientifically established, without the possibility of a doubt, for all future generations, the reality of an external world. The appeal he makes to common sense, i.e., to those principles of belief, upon which we are compelled to act at the peril of being considered madmen, and which the most rigid sceptic, whatever be his theory, is obliged in

practice to allow, was unquestionably a most powerful one, and succeeded in driving scepticism from one stronghold to another, however reluctant it might be to yield them.

We doubt, however, whether such an appeal is able to dislodge the enemy from his last and strongest defence. The sceptic, be it observed, is equally ready with ourselves to admit, that *common sense* always takes its stand upon the real existence of an outward object in perception, and that we must all *practically* act upon the belief of it: but what he denies is, that this common sense is *theoretically* to be depended upon, since in some cases, which he is not slow to mention, it appears manifestly to be in error. To this the disciple of Reid can reply, that there is precisely the same authority to be attached to the conclusion of common sense respecting the real existence of the material world, as to any other dictate of the human understanding; and that if we deny that conclusion, we may equally deny every fact of our own consciousness.

Upon this, then, the sceptic betakes himself to his last refuge, and urges, with no little force, that although we must admit the reality of our own personal or subjective ideas, inasmuch as they are a part of our own inward experience, yet it still remains to be proved, that our perceptions, however clear, and our beliefs, however strong they may be *internally*, have reference to any object out of,

and distinct from ourselves. The sceptic thus intrenches himself within his own subjectivity, and though closely pressed and circumscribed by the energetic conclusions of common sense, yet sternly refuses to yield this his last point.

Reid deprived himself of the power of answering this final argument, by maintaining that perception is altogether *an act of the mind* ; for so long as we admit with him that this is really the case, it remains yet to be shewn, how we can possibly avoid the above conclusion in which the sceptic persists. If the mind has power to perceive any object purely by its own act, there is no absurdity in supposing the *possibility* of its producing within itself the same effect, *without* the actual presence or existence of the object. It is true that common sense renders it highly improbable, that such should be the case ; yet still so long as perception is regarded as a subjective process, and an idea defined to be *the act* of the mind in making itself acquainted with the phenomena of external things, we are unable to point out to the sceptic what he demands—namely, a clear passage from this subjective activity of the mind to the outward and material reality.

The position that we must assume, if we would complete what Reid so nobly commenced, is, that the very essence of perception consists in *a felt relation* between mind and matter, that instead of being *wholly* the act of the mind, it is the union

of the subjective and the objective, necessarily arising from man's constitution as a being composed of soul and body. If you look to the acts of the will, you feel them to be purely personal or subjective;—if you look to an act of the reason, you feel that it refers simply to abstract truth, which the mind of itself could work out; but if you analyze a perception you at once detect in it another element, which does not depend upon the *will* or the *reason*, but upon some other existence out of, and distinct from, ourselves; so that perception, instead of being an operation of the mind, as Reid regarded it, is, in fact, an *intuitive felt relation* between self and nature, between the me and the not-me. The one of these related terms is, in truth, as much *given* in every act of perception as the other, neither can we abstract either the subject or the object without destroying the very essence of the thing itself.

It is this felt relation which probably suggested, and which for so many centuries kept alive the notion, that there was some link, material or spiritual, by which the objective and the subjective in nature were united; a link which Reid powerfully demonstrated to have no reality, and the supposition of which is rendered altogether unnecessary when we regard perception, as the *relation* which we feel to exist between our own minds and the external world. This, therefore, we consider as the scientific or theoretical form



of the doctrine of *immediate* perception, which the Scottish philosopher rested simply on the ground of a practical belief and denominated a principle of common sense.

Against Mr. Hume's attack upon the idea of causality, and his attempt to invalidate the proof thence derived for the existence of God, Reid appears to us to have dealt a more complete and effective blow, than he did against his argument respecting the material world. Hume first assumed *experience* as the sole foundation for our knowledge, and then of course easily demonstrated, that supersensual ideas like that of cause, or of the Deity, can have no real basis whatever, *in fact*. Reid denied, that experience is the only source from which truth can be derived, but pointed out the existence of certain intellectual and necessary judgments beyond the bounds of all experience, and proved that the belief in a sufficient cause, wherever we observe an effect, is one of them. It is true he did not probe the whole question of our instinctive beliefs to its centre, but, nevertheless, he established their reality on so solid a basis, that the truth which they convey was shewn to be as valid as any evidence whatever could make it. A more subtle analysis of the first principles of human knowledge might certainly have placed these beliefs in a clearer light, and reduced them to a smaller compass ; but the only effect of this would have been, to give them a more scientific

character than was done by the rough sketch, which Reid left behind him, and not to alter materially the drift of his main argument.

Whatever objections, therefore, might be brought against the philosophy of common sense, we conceive, that they must be for the most part negative. That Reid has done much for the advancement of mental science, is almost universally admitted; to complain that he did not accomplish *more*, or follow out the track which he opened to its furthest results, is perhaps unreasonable; since we ought rather to look for the completion of his labours from the hands of his followers, than demand from himself at once the foundation and the superstructure.

We cannot but regard it, however, as unfortunate, that Reid should have framed his idea of mental philosophy so completely upon the model of the natural sciences, that he should have determined to confine it within the narrow limits of psychology, and attempt nothing beyond the mere classification of phenomena. The psychological *method*, which he followed, we regard as excellent, nay, as the only true one, since it is absolutely necessary to determine the power and validity of the instrument by which all our knowledge is acquired, before we define what that knowledge is, and to what extent it can reach. But is it necessary to pause, when we have classified the various mental phenomena which every day's experience gives us, and altogether interdict any further advancement? True it is,

that we are able to *perceive* nothing beyond phenomena, but are we on that account to neglect the deductions of reason, the loftiest of our faculties, when it would lead into the region of existence itself? Whether we will or not, we *must* allow some ontological conclusions, inasmuch as we cannot conceive of the attributes either of matter or mind without the notion of a substance in which they adhere. As far as experience goes, it would be quite sufficient to call a material object a cluster of qualities, or to denominate mind a combination of powers, but reason does not allow us to stop until we have added a substratum to which both qualities and powers belong. If all the pure and legitimate deductions of our reason are included in the idea of psychology, we are content to confine philosophy within its limits; but if not, then we contend for a science of ontology, that has for its matter all that belongs to the essence of man, of the universe, and of God, viewing them as objective realities, whose existence we never could assume from the mere observation of phenomena, could never deduce by logical processes, but which we draw as the necessary conclusions of our higher reason. In this way we should be led into a loftier region of thought, to a kind of *prima philosophia*, where the sciences of mind, of matter, and of Deity, all unite in one.\*

Instead, therefore, of entirely separating the

\* Vide Appendix, Note B.

investigation of mental from that of all other phenomena, we should here perceive their mutual relations, and learn to gaze upon the universe both of mind and matter as a whole, the one harmonious production of the Infinite Intelligence. In this view of the case we should contemplate man in his mysterious connexion with nature, and nature in its relation to humanity, while the last and crowning problem would be, to shew how they both subsist in God. A system embracing this sweep of investigation, might be termed philosophy in its highest sense.

Had Reid pointed out this as the ultimate tendency of metaphysical research, we believe that his successors could have built upon such a foundation a noble superstructure of speculative philosophy; but having discouraged this attempt in the outset, his successors have for the most part trodden the path of mere observation, until the science which might soar to the very noblest efforts of the human intellect, and strive to solve the great problems of man, the universe, and their Creator, has dwindled down almost to puerility in the hands of some of its most recent advocates.

The immediate followers of Reid accordingly, true to the sentiments of their master, were chiefly employed in illustrating and defining the principles of common sense as the data of all real philosophy. Beattie's chief merit (independently of his valuable disquisitions on moral and æsthetical subjects)

consists in the clear distinction he makes between the axioms of common sense, and the logical deductions of our reason. His whole doctrine of evidence as grounded on this distinction contains much that is highly valuable and interesting; but there is no analysis of *pure reason*, nor any hint at the very existence of a higher faculty, on which the axioms of common sense themselves are all grounded.

In Oswald we see a still more slavish devotee to the same idol, inasmuch as he makes common sense the supreme judge in all philosophical investigations; while Ferguson at once cuts off the approach to a higher metaphysical science by laying down as the very principle of all science, that human knowledge is confined entirely to the observation of facts, and to the deduction from them of general rules. In doing so, he overlooks altogether the great truth, that there are conceptions by which alone the facts are intelligible, and axioms upon which the very process of induction rests; while in holding up *experience* as marking the limits of our philosophical knowledge he forgets, that there are laws of thought which are assuredly prior to all experience.

If, then, such *à priori* laws really exist, why, we ask, should there not be one branch of philosophy whose object is to inquire into them, and not only to point out our primary or necessary beliefs, but to trace them to their origin, as Kant does, in the

actual forms of the understanding or the reason? We forbear, however, to pursue our remarks on the Scotch philosophy any further at present, since it has found another and an abler expositor in Dugald Stewart, whose works we shall have another opportunity of criticising, when we come to consider the Scottish school, as it appears upon the stage of the nineteenth century. Any further remarks upon the deficiencies of Scottish metaphysics we shall leave for that occasion.

## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF SCEPTICISM AND MYSTICISM WHICH HAVE ARISEN OUT OF THE PRECEDING SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

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IN the former chapters the two chief and opposite methods of philosophizing have been explained, and the history of their principal movements down to the present century briefly related. The observation of outward facts, so strongly encouraged by sensationalism, has been shewn well adapted to give rise to a splendid school of physical science, while that habit of reflection upon the inward operations of the mind, which is nurtured by idealism, has unquestionably produced in its turn many highly interesting and valuable results of another description. Either of these systems, however, when it would embrace the whole sphere of human knowledge, and interdict every idea which has not come through one peculiar channel, soon conducts us to the most false and injurious results.

Let us see this with regard to sensationalism. The whole process of sensation, we are conscious, is passive: the moment, therefore, we attempt, like Condillac, to reduce all our notions to different

species of transformed sensations, we virtually destroy the natural liberty or energy of the human mind, and make humanity itself but an ingenious piece of mechanism which is moved hither and thither by forces impressed upon it from the outward world. Human freedom accordingly perishes under the hands of a bold sensationalism. Again, further, if this philosophy be valid, there can be no such thing as necessary truth. Our sensations, we know, are by no means uniform and unchangeable, but entirely dependent upon a material organization; so that we cannot have, through their instrumentality, any proof of the existence of ought beyond the passing objects that we daily see and hear and feel around us. Nay, we cannot in the end save even these, as Hume has abundantly shewn, from the attacks of a philosophical unbelief.

Idealism, on the contrary, leads us just as far from truth in the other direction. Neglecting the peculiar element which exists in all our perceptions, and by which we are inseparably linked to the material world, it first of all attempts to deduce the notion of matter by a logical process from our purely rational ideas; failing, however, to afford satisfaction by this process, it begins to undermine the validity of the notion itself, and ends at length in its positive denial. Both sensationalism, therefore, and idealism, when exclusively pursued and developed to their farthest results, lead us into a labyrinth of error from which it appears impossible



for any philosophy to extricate us: they both give us the thread by which we may enter into the very centre of the metaphysical maze, but having conducted us there, they snap it asunder, and leave us in perplexity which way to turn in order to retrace our steps. The consequence infallibly is, that philosophy becomes distrusted, that the conclusions of reason are set at nought, and that a boastful scepticism is engendered, which magnifies itself against all science, and builds itself up upon the metaphysical errors which it can deride but not correct.

We would not, however, assert that all scepticism is of this pernicious character; for just in the same manner as we have seen sensationalism and idealism to have a good side as well as a bad, so likewise scepticism, when confined within its proper limits, has its uses, and may be made subservient to the development of truth. All that we desire now to point out is the fact, that philosophical paradoxes, whether they be derived from a shallow or a deep metaphysical system, have a natural tendency to shake our confidence in the power and authority of the human reason, and engender a disposition to regard scepticism as our only safeguard against philosophical conclusions, which we almost instinctively refuse to admit.

The fact, however, that all extremes will at length meet is strikingly illustrated in the case now before us. The extreme of scepticism is sure to lead into the central regions of mysticism, the most

sweeping unbelief into the very worst follies of credulity. The greatest unbeliever is of all men the most credulous ; he rejects, perhaps, a thousand truths which rest upon a solid and satisfactory evidence, but then is obliged to accept some crude system of his own, into which none of these truths (to save his consistency) are permitted to enter. The sceptic, for example, who denies the divine origin of Christianity, may often appear at first sight rational in his objections, so long as he is engaged in pulling down the common belief of Christendom ; but the moment he is called upon to build up a system of his own, the moment he is required to account for the facts of the case upon some other hypothesis, he soon begins to draw far more largely than his opponents upon the very credulity which he has derided. And not only this, but the more universal the scepticism, the greater must be the credulity by which it is followed ; because exactly in proportion to the number of facts which are first rejected, must be the paucity which are left behind on which to construct a new system. From these considerations, therefore, we can easily see how naturally, and almost necessarily, in the march of intellectual philosophy, mysticism springs out of the spirit of scepticism.

The use of scepticism is to check a too ambitious and rapid generalization, to discover all the flaws in the foundations of human science, which might in time endanger the safety of the super-

structure ; but, having performed this duty, it must cease, and leave the completion of the edifice to other hands. Instead of this, the sceptical philosopher perchance, not content with chastising error (his proper office), proceeds to construct for himself a system of speculative truth : and then what is the result ? He has already sported with the authority of the human reason, he has undermined some of its most obvious conclusions, and now that he has placed these beyond the pale of certainty, he must have recourse to any other element, by which he can supply the place of that which he has rejected. Such an element he finds in the undefined impulses of our spiritual nature, and the spontaneous working of our mental instincts ; and from these accordingly he seeks to originate a system of truth, to which he regards the power of reason quite unable to attain, and which is rightly attributed to the workings of *mysticism*. It is the philosophical *sceptic*, therefore, who first shakes the confidence which men had reposed in the authority of their reason ; and it is the *mystic* who, to supply its place, introduces that new element of faith or feeling by one of which his philosophy is always characterised. The ultimate relationship, however, existing between these two movements will be better seen in the historical sketch to which we now proceed.

SECTION I.—*Scepticism and Mysticism on the Continent, from the Age of Descartes to the commencement of the Nineteenth Century.*

The two master minds who gave its first tendencies to the modern philosophy of France were Gassendi and Descartes. The Gassendists, like Hobbes in our own country, adopted many of the extreme results of sensationalism; while the Cartesians, as we have before seen, leaned with an equal partiality to idealism. In the contests which arose between these two schools, the weak sides of both were alternately held up to view, and the baneful results exhibited, to which either of them, if rigidly followed out, would invariably lead. The juncture then had arrived, at which scepticism was needed to pull down, on either hand, what was weak and unsatisfactory in their respective principles; and accordingly, just at this juncture, scepticism actually made its appearance, to perform the work assigned it in the progress of human knowledge.

Previous, however, to our bringing the chief actors in this scene before our attention, there is one caution which we must strongly impress upon the mind of every reader; that is, not to confound theological with philosophical scepticism. By theological scepticism we mean a rejection of the authority of natural or revealed religion; by philosophical scepticism, we mean a distrust of the validity of the intellectual faculties and the authority

of the human reason. The two may, in a few instances, have been united, as they were in Hume and in some others, who have carried the tendency to unbelief to an extreme; but in the great majority of instances, the case is far otherwise. Religious scepticism has, in fact, more commonly than not been found among the disciples of sensationalism and idealism; the former proceeding more frequently to atheistical, the latter to pantheistical results; while philosophical scepticism, so far from being identified with this, arises frequently from a mistaken zeal for the authority of religious faith.

With this one observation premised, we now return to consider the different shades of scepticism and mysticism on the continent of Europe, from the period to which we have just alluded to the opening of the present century.

(A.) FIRST PERIOD—ORIGINATING FROM DESCARTES AND  
GASSENDI.

The first sceptical school of France was precisely of the nature just described. Its disciples were, for the most part, ecclesiastics who attempted to save the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church, by impugning the sufficiency of that reason, by the aid of which the philosophers of their day were deducing conclusions anything but consistent with the common belief of Catholic Christianity. One of the most learned of this class was Peter Daniel

Huet, Bishop of Avranches, born at Caen, A.D. 1630. In his early youth, he had been instructed in the Cartesian philosophy, but finding this unsatisfactory, he went over to the Gassendists to see if any of his difficulties could be removed by the tenets of that school. Finding many of their doctrines to be in direct opposition to his religious faith, he became altogether disgusted with speculative reasoning, and sought a refuge in philosophical scepticism.

His sceptical opinions assumed somewhat of the following form. First, that although there may be, yea, and undoubtedly is, such a thing as objective reality, yet the human reason is too feeble, and has to encounter too many obstacles in the acquisition of knowledge, to be ever absolutely certain, whether our ideas correspond with that reality to any degree of accuracy or not. Secondly, that the only principle by which we can attain to certainty is faith,—a principle which lies altogether beyond the reach of scepticism, inasmuch as it arises not from our natural faculties, but from an immediate operation of God.

The chief work in which Huet's sceptical principles are embodied is entitled, "An Essay concerning the weakness of the Human Understanding," which was translated into English by Edw. Combe, A.M., and published at London in the year 1725. The first book is intended to prove, that truth cannot be known with absolute certainty

by the help of reason. This position he strengthens by an appeal to the imperfection of the senses, to the representationalist theory of human knowledge, (which he considers indisputably true,) to the opinions of all the sceptical philosophers of antiquity, and lastly, to revelation itself. The second book makes us acquainted with the legitimate way of philosophising, which, he affirms, is only found, when we learn to supply the defects of reason by the higher principle of faith; while the third book is occupied in repelling objections. The whole work gives us a remarkable instance of the union of philosophical scepticism and religious credulity in a man of most universal attainments and profound understanding.

A far more noted instance, however, of this species of philosophical scepticism, mingled at the same time with a strong infusion of mysticism, presents itself in the writings of Blaise Pascal, whose "Thoughts" will be read as long as reflection and piety continue to go hand in hand through the world. Few writings of a tendency to depreciate the validity of the human reason can be found, which contain so little that is objectionable, and (with the exception of a degree of unhealthy and morbid melancholy) so much that is valuable and instructive as these. Pascal's scepticism is all aimed against the *abuses* of philosophy, which appeared to him of so grave a nature, as to wring from him the taunt which he seemed to adopt

almost as a principle, "Se moquer de la philosophie c'est vraiment philosopher." His early life had been devoted to the eager pursuit of mathematical studies; he had there accustomed his mind to look for demonstrative evidence as being alone satisfactory; and when, by some striking events in his life, he was aroused from his absorption in these studies to contemplate the great problems of human existence and destiny, he became manifestly dejected by the discovery, that demonstration must on these questions be altogether dispensed with. He required of philosophy that it should answer all the deep inquiries of the longing spirit with the same decisive voice, that he had been accustomed to listen to in the department of the pure sciences, and when he found the voice to come tremblingly and half inaudibly from the inmost soul, he began impatiently to distrust that reason, which failed at once to answer his hopes and expectations, and to seek a substitute in revelation.

Far, indeed, should we be from denouncing the appeal which Pascal makes, on purely religious questions, from the authority of reason to that of revelation, as altogether incorrect; for allowing, as we do, such a revelation to exist, an appeal of that nature is in perfect consistency with the best light of reason itself; but it was not necessary, when reason failed to satisfy his heart's yearnings after God and immortality, to undermine its authority on *all moral questions whatever*. In doing so, he



doubtless repressed a too bold speculation within the region of theology, but at the same time he tacitly advocated principles which, if carried out, would have gone far to strike at the root of the fairest portions of human knowledge.

A similar, but far less profound scepticism than that of Pascal, manifested itself about the same time in Germany. Its importance, however, is not sufficient to detain us, in order to give any particular account of its advocates. One of the principal of these was Jerome Hernhaim of Prague, the title of whose work gives us almost as clear a conception of his philosophy as a perusal of the work itself. It runs as follows:—"De typho generis humani, sive de scientiarum humanarum inani et ventoso tumore, difficultate, labilitate, falsitate, jactantiâ, præsumptione, incommodis et periculis; tractatus brevis, in quo etiam vera sapientia a falsâ discernitur, simplicitas mundo contempta extollitur, idiotis in solatium, doctis in cautelam conscriptus."

The other authors of this period who wrote in the same strain, were such as by no means to require even a mention in describing the historical progress of philosophy.

Whilst the theologians of the age were thus engaged in repressing the bolder flights of the human reason, and advancing, in their zeal, sentiments detrimental to its just authority, another race of sceptical philosophers arose, who rested

their arguments upon altogether a different foundation. The men to whom I now allude were educated in the sensationalistic school of Gassendi; and accordingly, instead of invalidating the powers of the human reason in favour of religious faith, they took their start on the road to scepticism from those empirical principles, for which the remodelled Epicureanism of the Gassendists was remarkable. Samuel Sorbiere and Simon Foucher both belong to this class, the former of whom published a translation of Sextus Empiricus, with notes and illustrations; while the latter revived the spirit of the new academy, and with its anti-dogmatical principles, firmly opposed the views of Descartes and Malebranche.

The general character of this school of philosophers was that of profound erudition, great knowledge of history, and a pleasing combination of wit and elegance; without any claim, however, to deep and patient metaphysical thinking. These qualities appeared, perhaps, in their highest degree, in the works of Peter Bayle, whom we may regard as the most perfect type of the philosophers of this class. The mind of Bayle was formed by nature to move in an orbit of its own, imbued, as it seemed, with an irrepressible desire of doing what no man else would do, of thinking what no man else would think, and of finding out, by the most profound research and unwearied diligence, every paradox that was discoverable in the opinions

of others. Accustomed from his early youth to theological strife, and having himself two or three times crossed the boundary between Protestantism and Popery, he settled down into a fixed aversion to all dogmatism, both philosophical and theological, and spent nearly his whole life in exposing it by his learning, and satirizing it by his wit. To assign to Bayle any deep metaphysical acumen, would undoubtedly be incorrect; but few men ever possessed a more penetrating power of research into the opinions of other thinkers, and a greater talent in discovering their weak points.

This spirit of severe criticism, together with his fondness for the philosophy of Montaigne, naturally produced in him a tendency to examine everything with a sceptical eye, and led him at length to deny the possibility of obtaining any positive philosophical knowledge, that should defy the assaults of sceptical ingenuity. That the human reason was sufficient to detect error, however latent, he firmly believed, and was himself one of the most illustrious proofs of his principle; but so completely did he seem moulded to the work of criticism and controversy, that after having at one time pointed out the inconsistency of reason with revelation, and at another, the inconsistency of revelation with reason, he seemed to rest at last in the assurance that absolute truth is altogether undiscoverable, and that we must get as near to it as we can by criticizing and correcting the aberrations of those

who have sought it. Such then, in brief, were the principal forms which the sceptical philosophy of that age assumed. It first took its origin from the abuses of the other systems, and performed by no means a useless part, when, in correcting those abuses, it sent back some of the greatest minds of the day (Leibnitz, to wit,) to examine the very foundations of human knowledge, and to lay them over afresh with greater caution and solidity.

From this brief notice of the early scepticism of the Continent, we must now turn to the *mystical* elements which co-existed with it.

The close connexion between scepticism and mysticism has been already shown, and the incipient mystical tendency pointed out, as it appeared in some of the philosophers we have just mentioned. We have now, however, to detail the avowed and decided efforts which mysticism put forth to form philosophical systems, and to supply the place of that reason, whose authority was disowned by the sceptics. Such attempts made their appearance almost simultaneously in France and Germany, although, in neither country, did they produce systems of any superior eminence. Francis Mercurius Van Helmont (born 1619, died 1699) inherited from his father a strong bias to the mystical. Stimulated by the errors in which the other schools appeared involved, he was induced to make fresh attempts to combine the doctrines of Plato, of the Cabbala, and of the Bible,

into a new theory, the chief objects of which appeared to be to refer both mind and matter to one and the same essence, and to reinstate the Pythagorean dogma of transmigration. Marcus Marci of Kronland, Jean Engle a Silesian, and a few others, followed somewhat closely in his footsteps; the former of whom, especially, attempted to bring back some of the mystical notions of antiquity, in a work entitled "*Philosophia vetus Restituta*."

In France, Peter Poiret (born 1625, died 1698) advocated a mystical philosophy, which was more directly of a practical nature. Opposed, on the one hand, to Descartes to whose philosophy he had for some time been attached, and on the other to the now growing opinions of Locke, against whom he wrote an able treatise, he sought refuge from the weakness of the reason in faith, as the legitimate source of truth, and from the corruption of the will in grace, as the source of all virtue. Theologically there are, perhaps, some things that may be considered valuable in the writings of Poiret; but the extension of his religious notions into the proper boundaries of speculative philosophy, to say nothing of his strong tendency to fanaticism, points him out to us as one of the most decided instances of mysticism in his age and country. Fenelon, who favoured that species of religious sentiment which France has designated by the term Quietism, may likewise be numbered

among the mystics who arose at this period of French literature. He too, however, is to be reckoned amongst the theological rather than the philosophical phenomena of the age.\*

But the most wide-spread school of religious mysticism, and that into which most of the others merged, was formed by the disciples of Swedenbourg. To enter into the doctrines advocated by this sect, as in the former cases, would be the part of the theologian rather than the philosopher; but still there is sufficient of a scientific character in the writings of the remarkable man, who stands at its head, to preclude the possibility of his strict followers forming or holding any metaphysical system beyond the assumed revelations of their apostle. This being the case, they must be regarded as containing a philosophy as well as a theology. In the work, indeed, entitled "Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom," the principles of mental philosophy are laid down, so far as to form the basis of a complete science to any one who can make up his mind to receive them on the very slender evidence by which they are supported. With the strange and fanciful conceptions themselves which are there contained, of course we have here nothing to do, as they are not presented to us as being regularly deduced from any philosophical principles whatever. All we have now to notice is

\* *Vide* Note C., Appendix.

the *ground* on which they propose to claim our belief. This ground is very clearly defined. The foundation of all the Swedenborgian philosophy, as well as theology, is that of direct intuition, granted by special revelation from God; and therefore, as the power of the unaided reason is disowned in the discovery of truth, the whole doctrine must be set down as one of those channels, through which the mystical element, during this period, found an easy passage over many countries, and amongst many different people.

These phenomena, then, which we have just enumerated, may be viewed as the various waves of scepticism and mysticism, which, having been first raised by the storms of controversy, in which the idealism of Descartes and the sensationalism of Gassendi were so long engaged, propagated themselves in different degrees of intensity for many years over several parts of the Continent of Europe. In the meantime the phases of idealistic and sensational philosophy themselves had altogether changed. The philosophy of Descartes had passed through the hands of Malebranche and Spinoza, had been remodelled by Leibnitz, and had come forth in a new dogmatic form under the auspices of Wolf. That of Gassendi, on the other hand, had given place to the more profound and, at the same time, more popular sensationalism of Locke, and his expounder Condillac; so that the effects of the old Cartesian controversy had

hardly expended themselves, before the fresh struggles of these *remodelled* systems were throwing in the seeds of a new scepticism and a new mysticism, which were to bear their fruits during the greater part of the eighteenth century. This leads us to

(B.) THE SECOND PERIOD—ORIGINATING FROM LOCKE  
AND LEIBNITZ.

The scepticism and mysticism of the *eighteenth* century, to which we now advert, shewed many points of diversity from that which preceded it. In France almost all traces of both died away, for the whole mind of the country became now too much absorbed in the rising school of materialism, and its devotion to physical science, to give rise to much literature of a metaphysical kind beyond these limits. Germany, on the contrary, in which the Leibnitzian-Wolfian philosophy was swaying a very feeble sceptre, gave far more opportunity for the growth of sceptical principles, aided on, as they were, by the able and acute advocacy which they had received in this country from the versatile pen of Hume. The court of Frederick the Great, who welcomed men of any opinions so long as they had somewhat of the French taste and refinement about them, was surrounded by a multitude of *savans*, many of whom took a malignant pride in depreciating all the philosophical as well as religious notions of their day, in favour of a shallow and fashionable scepticism.



Among these the Marquis d'Argens figured as the author of a work, by no means deficient in erudition, entitled, "The Philosophy of Good Sense," the object of which was to throw doubts, not only upon the conclusions of logic and metaphysics, but upon those of history, and even natural philosophy and astronomy itself. A still more direct attempt at philosophical scepticism was made by M. De Beausobre, who, in a work entitled "Pyrrhonisme Raisonable," advocated a system but few removes from that of the philosopher whose name he adopted, and which contained many attacks upon almost all the dogmatical systems of philosophy, from Aristotle down to Wolf. The same tendency was exhibited in "Platner's Aphorisms," and several other productions of that period, which are but little known in this country, and which, even in Germany itself, have been long lost sight of, eclipsed by the brighter lights which have since arisen in their hemisphere.

These, we believe, were the most prominent *sceptical* writings which made their appearance during this period. As to mysticism,—mysticism of a direct nature, made but little fresh appearance during the middle of the eighteenth century; the school of Swedenbourg, perhaps, affording an indirect outlet for many notions of this description, which might otherwise have presented some peculiar features of their own. It was, however, in the latter part of this century, that St. Martin

translated the works of Jacob Boehme, and originated the doctrine of religious mysticism in France, for which he is famous. Any one who wishes to understand the foundation upon which St. Martin built most of his peculiar notions, has, in order to appreciate it aright, only to peruse the writings of Henry More, one of the Cambridge Platonists, and then imagine the principles there advocated reared up under the guidance of a versatile and enthusiastic spirit, as a barrier against the philosophical sensationalism of Condillac and the religious scepticism of Voltaire. St. Martin was in many respects very similar to that mystical, but still admirable writer, and the opinions prevalent in France, when he gave utterance to his thoughts, were such as to rouse his whole soul to action, in the attempt to place his own lofty spiritualism in direct opposition to them.

To give some idea of the method of philosophizing, which is found in the writings of the "unknown philosopher," as he was often termed, I will give a single passage, translated from an article in the "Archives Littéraires," which appeared in 1804, just after his death, and in which the spirit of his system is ably delineated. The system of St. Martin aims at explaining everything by means of *man*. Man is to him the key to every phenomenon, and the image of all truth. Taking, therefore, literally the famous oracle of Delphi, "*nosce te ipsum*," he maintains that, if we would

fall into no mistakes respecting existence, and the harmony of all beings in the universe, we have only to understand *ourselves*, inasmuch as the body of man has a necessary relation to everything visible, and his spirit is the type of everything that is invisible. What we should study, then, are the physical faculties that depend upon our bodily organization, the intellectual faculties whose exercise is often influenced by the senses and exterior objects, and the moral faculties or the conscience, which supposes free will. It is in this study that we must seek for truth, and we shall find in ourselves all the necessary means of arriving at it: this it is which our author calls natural revelation. For example: The smallest attention, he says, suffices to assure us that we neither communicate nor form any idea without its being preceded by a picture or image of it, engendered by our understanding: in this way it is, that we originate the plan of a building, or any other work. Our creative faculty is vast, active, inexhaustible; but in examining it closely, we see that it is only secondary, temporary, dependent; that is to say, that it owes its origin to a creative faculty, which is superior, independent, and universal, of which ours is but a feeble copy. Man, therefore, is a type, which must have a prototype, and that prototype is God.

From this extract the reader may form some idea of the philosophical mysticism, by which St. Martin

attempted to supplant the shallow materialism and growing infidelity of his age, and to induce his countrymen to take a deeper insight into the constitution of the human mind, and its close connexion with the Divine.

(C.) THIRD PERIOD—ORIGINATING WITH KANT AND  
CONDILLAC.

The writings of Kant and Condillac formed a new era in the progress both of sensationalism and of idealism. As their respective systems became propagated, the minor efforts of the philosophical spirit—its sceptical as well as its mystical tendencies—gradually disappeared. The former expired under the gigantic power of the one, the latter was dissipated by the clear and lucid analysis of the other. France and Germany now seemed to be equally divided between the material school of Paris, and the idealistic school of Königsberg, and in our present sketch we have to pause for a time silent spectators of this conflict, until we see scepticism and mysticism again appearing between the combatants, anew to chastise their too great temerity, and anew to send them back to a closer examination of the fundamental principles, upon which they were respectively building. Accordingly, ere the century comes to a close, we see the indications of a new system, both of sceptical and mystical philosophy emanating from the Kantian metaphysics; the former brought forward by

Schulz, the latter by Jacobi. As both of these writers, however, though belonging actually to the eighteenth century, yet pertain, as far as their influence goes, more closely to the nineteenth, we shall hereafter take them up as an introduction to the sceptical and mystical philosophy of Germany during the present age. We now come back to our own country.

SECTION II.—*Scepticism and Mysticism in England, from the Time of Bacon to the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century.*

A struggle, similar to that which we have described between the Cartesians and Gassendists in France, was carried on at the very same period in England between the disciples and the opponents of Hobbism. The idealistic tendency, however, was far less extravagant in our own country than it became on the Continent, in the hands of Malebranche and Spinoza; and the scepticism which arose from its paradoxes was proportionably of a less sweeping character. The author, who in England most perfectly expressed the sceptical tendency of this age, was Joseph Glanville, court-preacher to King Charles the Second, whose work, entitled "*Scepsis Scientifica, or Confessed Ignorance the Way to Science, in an Essay of the Vanity of dogmatizing and confident Opinion,*" was intended rather to controvert the pretensions

of the Aristotelian and the Cartesian philosophy; than to involve the whole circumference of human knowledge in darkness and uncertainty.

The most remarkable portions of this work are the observations it contains upon causation, in which he very clearly gives the germ of the theory, which was afterwards more fully developed by Hume. Causes, he argues, are the alphabet of science, without which it is impossible for us to understand any part of nature aright. But causes lie altogether beyond the reach of experience, which reveals to us nothing but phenomena; and, consequently, as experience is the only true source of human knowledge, it follows that the knowledge which men have pretended to reach of scientific and abstract truth, cannot be anything better than hypothesis. This reasoning, though not very profound, is yet remarkable as a display of the systematic scepticism, which was then at work within a narrow circle, and as being a kind of preparation for the deeper and more comprehensive views, which were soon after propounded by the Scottish sceptical philosopher who succeeded him.

Mysticism, on the other hand, was favoured at this time with a far greater share of attention, and was supported by far greater learning, than were the feeble efforts of incipient scepticism. The way to this was, perhaps, already paved by the efforts of Robert Fludd (born 1574, died 1637) to revive the fanatical doctrines of Paracelsus; but the more

direct cause is to be found in the fact that many lofty minds, disgusted with Hobbism on the one hand, and unsatisfied with Cartesianism on the other, took refuge in the sublime philosophy of Plato, and devoted themselves with severe and ardent study to the elucidation of his writings. Cudworth, whom we have already classed amongst those who manifested a tendency to idealism, was one of these Platonic philosophers, and not unfrequently mingled up with his more strictly rationalistic views, notions which bear upon their features somewhat of a mystical character. But in Henry More, his friend and companion (born 1614, died 1687), we see exemplified the whole process both of scepticism and mysticism through which the human mind is often led, after being compelled to distrust the conclusions of the current philosophy.

More was educated, according to the custom of the age, in the scholastic doctrines; but, being driven from these by the refutation they had received in the writings of Lord Bacon and his successors, he became a most zealous Cartesian, and even corresponded with Descartes himself on some questions relating to his philosophy. Finding, however, no certainty from these principles, and seeing, with great penetration, the paradoxes among which he would be involved in carrying them out to their just inferences, he plunged so deeply into scepticism, that he at length began even to doubt the proof of his own individuality. Not

yet, however, was the yearning after truth altogether repressed by the spirit of unbelief; for we find him soon after buried in the deep mines of Platonism, and hear him after a while declaring, according to the Platonic doctrine, that true and perfect knowledge, which alone renders us happy, can only be found in that mental purity and spiritual enlightenment, by which we are elevated to a union with the Divine mind itself.

More was deeply impressed with the belief, that the revelation which God had originally made to the Hebrew nation had been communicated through the Pythagorean books to Plato; and not only this, but that the Cabbalistic philosophy as well, contained a system of truth couched under its metaphors and symbols, which was likewise to be traced to the same Divine origin. On this ground he sought to prove, that there is a unity of spirit pervading these various writings, and that the whole sum of true philosophy had its germ in the illumination which man originally received from the supernatural communication made to him by God. The love which More manifested to the most ethereal portions of Platonism, his warm defence of the Cabbala, his peculiar theological tenets, beside many of his poems, all clearly indicated his decided leaning to mysticism. These collateral views, however, might have been passed by almost unnoticed, or regarded simply as the poetic excursions of a lofty soul towards the elevated



regions of spiritualism. But in addition to all this, there is in his philosophy a calm and dispassionate maintaining of the very same doctrines. It is when we find him asserting, on the one hand, that the *organ* of true knowledge in man is a direct and divine intuition; and, on the other hand, that the original and only source of truth objectively considered is an immediate revelation from God, that we become most sensible how deeply he had drunk into the spirit of philosophical as well as of religious mysticism.

Theophilus Gale, a Presbyterian clergyman, contemporary with More, followed in the same direction, although by no means to so great a length. He regarded the Bible alone as the original source of true philosophy, and traced all the real knowledge that different heathen nations possessed to its pages, as the fountain from which the whole had originally sprung. His chief work is entitled "*Philosophia Universalis*," where he strongly recommends the writers of the new Platonic school, and shows the close connexion that exists between the department of the philosopher on the one hand, and the divine on the other.

The most open and avowed mysticism, however, of this period, was that of John Pordage (born 1625, died 1698), who spread abroad much the same doctrines in England as Peter Poiret was at the same time engaged in diffusing throughout France. The philosophy of Pordage was founded

upon the writings of Jacob Boehme, whose notions he attempted first to systematize and arrange, and then to vindicate by an appeal to revelation. The general character of his system may be seen by the title of one of his chief works, which runs as follows:—"Theologia Mystica sive arcana mysticaque doctrina de invisibilibus æternis, &c., non rationali arte, sed cognitione intuitivâ descripta." With this title alone, we apprehend, our readers will be quite satisfied, and therefore, having brought it for a moment to their view, we must leave it to those who are curious in tracing the meanderings of the human spirit in its search after truth, to investigate more at length the principles upon which the doctrines advanced under it are founded, and to estimate the value of the results to which they may possibly lead.

The bald enumeration of the foregoing names may, perhaps, seem to require some apology. Our simple object in doing so has been to show, what phenomena of a mystical and sceptical tendency actually made their appearance at this time, without crowding our pages, and taxing the patience of our readers with the useless details of long-forgotten theories.

Here, then, the history of the English scepticism and mysticism, as they appeared successively during the seventeenth century, closes. The philosophy of Locke, which became popular to an almost unprecedented extent towards the close of this

period, produced an influence upon the thinkers of the age, which turned the whole current of metaphysical speculation into a new channel. The mystic Platonism, and the Cartesian rationalism which had prevailed so extensively throughout the country, were gradually forgotten, and all eyes seemed turned to Locke as the great oracle, who was to solve all the doubts in which philosophy had been involved, and to probe with unerring accuracy all the powers and faculties of the human understanding.

The principles of Locke's celebrated "Essay" we have already criticised at some length, and shown, we trust sufficiently, the dangerous readiness which it manifested, to regard experience as the sole basis, upon which any system of truth could be erected. To refute this, idealism, as we have also seen, raised a strong opposition; but whilst curbing the advancing sensationalism in its course, it did not stop in its own progress until it had, in the person of Berkeley, denied the very existence of the material world. The result of this contest was natural. To suppose that the extreme empirical principles, which flowed from the school of Locke, should exist on the one hand, and the perfected idealism of Berkeley should co-exist on the other, both leading to many strange and paradoxical results, without, at the same time, shaking the confidence of mankind in the power and authority of the human reason, and urging them on the road

to scepticism, was, according to all the results of former experience, absolutely impossible. We naturally look, therefore, for an energetic display of scepticism, which should answer in some measure to the ability and acuteness, with which the other rival theories were supported; and if there be any truth in the supposition that the sceptical element is the check, which, by our very constitution, is intended to curb the rashness of a too hasty generalisation, our expectations could not, assuredly, in this instance, be disappointed.

The scepticism which arose out of the school of Locke, we find, in fact, to be the most deeply grounded in its principles, the most logical in its arguments, and the most sweeping in its conclusions, of any which the history of philosophy has recorded; and the name of David Hume, its great advocate, will ever be remembered as associated with all that is bold and comprehensive in the attacks, which have been made against the validity of human knowledge.

Hume united in himself, to a high degree, the observing power of sensationalism, with the faculty of abstract reasoning that has generally belonged peculiarly to idealism, and knew perfectly what had been found unsatisfactory in the one system, as well as what was inconclusive in the other. He came, properly speaking, from the school of Locke, and adopted throughout, the fundamental axioms of that philosophy for his own; but he could equally

well employ the rationalistic method of Descartes, whenever it suited his purpose, in order to strengthen the grounds of his startling unbelief.

To the first principles, from which he took his start, no one at that time could very strongly demur; as it was then generally admitted that Locke's account of the origin of our ideas was correct, and that the whole of our knowledge might really be traced to sensation or reflection as its primary source. Hume, in fact, did little more than change the current phraseology, when he said that all our mental phenomena consist of *impressions* and *ideas*; including under the former our direct perceptions, and by the latter, meaning the *signs* of them, which, by virtue of memory, association, &c., remain after the impression has ceased. In addition to this, he was only following Aristotle, the scholastic philosophers, Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke himself, when he assumed as indisputable the representationalist theory of human knowledge, and took for granted, that by the *idea* of any real outward existence, we are to understand the representation or copy of it actually existing within our own minds; this copy being the sole means by which we can attain to the knowledge of the objective.

Now, these two fundamental principles, that of the representationalist theory of human knowledge, and that of the sensational origin of our ideas, form the basis, and contain the prolific germs of all

the astounding scepticism for which Hume became celebrated throughout Europe. The first of these principles Bishop Berkeley had already employed, in order to undermine the evidence of the external world; and Hume clearly saw that all the arguments which Descartes or others had used to prove the existence of matter, completely failed before the more close and consecutive reasoning of that prelate. But not content with the idealism thus originated, he went on to show that Berkeley, although perfectly correct as far as he had ventured to proceed in his argument, had not carried it out to its legitimate extent; that he ought to have applied his principles to the subjective as well as the objective world, and that as impressions and ideas express everything of which we are conscious, (the whole mass of our knowledge being reducible to these two heads), we have no right to conclude upon the real existence of a substance called mind, any more than that which is termed matter.

It was against the representationalist theory, as being the foundation of these sceptical conclusions, that Reid directed the chief points of his controversy; and it was upon the successful refutation of it that he claimed his chief originality as a metaphysician. For our estimate of this controversy, therefore, we must refer our readers back to the last chapter, in which we have shewn how far Reid appears to have merited the honour that he laid claim to, and pointed out in what

manner the arguments of scepticism upon this head may be satisfactorily repelled.

The most famous portions of Hume's scepticism, however, were the conclusions he drew from his empirical principles respecting the origin of our ideas. Every notion, according to these principles, which cannot shew some impression, *i. e.*, some direct sensation from which it proceeds, is altogether delusive, and must be rejected as worthless by the true experimental philosopher. Amongst these merely imaginary notions, Hume places that of *power*, it being evident that we can learn from experience nothing more than the existence of certain changes, which take place under certain circumstances, and that there is no perceptive faculty in man, by which the link that connects any two given events can possibly be discovered.

↑ It was this argument that led Kant to undertake the "Critique of Pure Reason." "I freely own," remarks that great thinker, "that the suggestions of David Hume were what first, many years ago, roused me from my dogmatical slumbers, and gave to my inquiries quite a different direction in the field of speculative philosophy. \* \* \*

I first inquired whether Hume's objection might not be a general one, and soon found that the idea of cause and effect is far from being the only one, by which the understanding *à priori* thinks of the connexion of things; but rather that the science of metaphysics is altogether founded upon these

connexions. I endeavoured to ascertain their number, and as I succeeded in this attempt, upon a single principle, I proceeded to the deduction of those general ideas which, I was now convinced, are not, as Hume apprehended, derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding. This deduction, which seemed impossible to my acute predecessor, and which nobody besides him had ever conceived,—although every one makes use of these ideas without asking himself upon what their objective validity is founded—this deduction was, I say, the most difficult which could have been undertaken for the behoof of metaphysics. And what was still more embarrassing, metaphysics could not here offer me the smallest assistance, because that deduction ought first to establish the possibility of a system of metaphysics. As I had now succeeded in the explanation of Hume's problem not merely in a particular instance, but with a view to the whole power of pure reason, I could advance with sure, though tedious steps; to determine completely, and upon general principles, the compass of pure reason, together with what is the sphere of its exertion, and what are its limits; which was all that was required for erecting a system of metaphysics upon a proper and solid foundation."

Now, it should be observed, that Hume did not by any means deny, that we have a distinct *idea* of cause and effect; all that he denied was, that



this idea contains any necessary or *à priori* element in it, anything, in other words, which does not come to us directly through the impressions of the senses. Against this conclusion, Reid appealed to common sense, which, he contended, obliges us whenever we perceive changes following each other in the physical world, to ascribe their existence to some power, that is, to an efficient cause; while Kant, looking at the question with a still profounder eye, shewed that the idea of cause and effect is one of the *à priori* forms, by which the human understanding necessarily views the connexion of external things. The particular aspect in which Hume proposed to test his doctrine of cause and effect, was that of the confidence we place in the uniformity of nature. Let us look, then, somewhat more closely at this great problem and, in our turn, test the truth of the method by which our author attempts to solve it.

✓ There is a universal and an unfailing expectation among men, that the same antecedents, under similar circumstances, will be followed by the same consequents; whence does this expectation arise? Does it arise from a course of reasoning grounded on experience, or from habit, or from the intuitive judgment we necessarily form, whenever we see an effect, that there must be some efficient cause or causes at work, which, under the same circumstances, will operate again in the same manner? Hume, in discussing the first hypothesis, shewed with

great power of reasoning, that it is impossible, from the mere experience of the past, to *demonstrate* by a logical process the recurrence of any set of events for the future. To the future, experience cannot at all apply, so that every judgment we form upon it from the past must involve the very expectation itself, for which we are attempting to account. To suppose that expectation, therefore, to be a logical inference from experience, which very inference itself is based upon it, would be only reasoning in a vicious circle. It would be deducing the expectation from the inference, and the inference from the expectation.

In this part of the controversy, Hume manifestly felt the strength of his position, and, we admit, used it to the very best advantage. This point, however, being disposed of, he proceeded to shew that the problem in question cannot be rightly solved by our having recourse to intuition, for, in accordance with his sensational principles, he denied that any knowledge whatever can be, properly speaking, of an intuitive kind, or have any other than an empirical origin. The only conclusion remaining was, that our belief in the uniformity of nature, *as a universal truth*, must arise from habit or custom, gradually formed and strengthened by the power of association. To explain the existence of this habit, he enters into an analysis of the laws of association, from which analysis he concludes that there are three, and

only three, principles of connexion between our ideas, namely, resemblance, contiguity, and causality. Accordingly, our belief in the relation of cause and effect is discovered to be a case of association, which, from its extreme frequency of occurrence, at last produces the idea that there is a real link of connexion between the two, and thus occasions our confidence in the uniform recurrence of natural phenomena to all futurity.

Now, if this be true, it is evident, that the belief in question must arise solely from the vividness or the strength of our associations. But does this, we ask, agree with the facts of our daily observation? Is there not a difference *in kind* as well as degree between a case of imagination, however vivid, and one of real belief? So evidently is this the fact, that we sometimes believe a thing, the impression of which is hardly clear and strong enough to be perceptible, while our most vivid conceptions of the imaginative kind altogether fall short of reality. Mere association can never produce belief unless there is some other element in the evidence beside. Even Hume himself, with all his acuteness, wavers, hesitates, and stumbles in the prosecution of his theory, and in one place is even betrayed so far as to admit that in the case of belief there must be *some* peculiarity in the manner in which the connected ideas are conceived, although he does not explain what that peculiarity is.

Again, the theory before us does not coincide with facts, when it states that our belief in the relation of cause and effect is formed and strengthened by the frequent recurrence of the association. If so, let any one produce a common instance, in which such belief has ever appeared feeble, or in which frequency of recurrence has made it a whit stronger than it was before. Any child, after the first experiment, manifests his conviction in the regularity of the laws of nature, as strongly as the octogenarian after the experience of his whole life, so that if the belief be of the gradual formation here described, it must have been *all* produced during a period of infancy prior to that in which we could make any observation upon it, or draw any conclusion whatever.

The theory which Reid maintained in opposition to this part of Hume's scepticism, (that, namely, in which he places our confidence in an efficient cause, whenever we see an effect, amongst man's instinctive beliefs,) was as complete as the philosophy of common sense could make it, and, we must admit, was well suited to resist the progress of so irrational an incredulity among the mass of his readers. But perhaps the question might have been reduced to a more simple case of primitive judgment. All our primitive judgments, as we have seen in our analysis of Locke, are at first particular and concrete. The axiom, "things which are equal to the same are equal to one

another," never suggests itself to a child's mind, and yet as soon as reason is developed enough to observe equality, that child shews that he can form the judgment, of which the above axiom is the general expression, in reference to any individual case that may come before him. In the same manner, when we first observe successive changes take place in nature, we form the judgment, that a parallelism of conditions indicates a parallelism of results ; that the same powers ever exist to bring about the same phenomena under similar circumstances, or to put the judgment in its simplest form, that the properties of similar things are themselves similar.

We do not, indeed, view this judgment, in the first instance, as an axiom of universal application, any more than we do those of mathematical reasoning ; but, having the belief of it *in the particular*, we gradually come to regard it more and more universally, until at length it appears before us in the full axiomatic form. The ground of our belief in the uniformity of nature, then, may be the intuitive perception of *similarity* ; add to this the idea of power derived from the energy of our own will, and suggested by the change we see effected, and we have all the elements, which, when perfected by induction or experience, complete the doctrine of causality, and lay a basis for the fundamental principles of natural theology, which it is beyond the reach of scepticism, how-

ever bold or subtle, to shake. In this view of the case we are not differing materially from the doctrine of Kant, who reckons the notion of causality as one of the necessary forms of judgment under which we view the *relations* of outward objects, and which is so much the more satisfactory than the principle of common sense, inasmuch as it resolves it into a more general law of our mental constitution.

On whatever theory, however, we may choose to account for it, still the fact remains the same, that the idea of change or of phenomenon necessarily involves and suggests that of a cause, a purpose, or a sufficient reason, and that this is accompanied with a full conviction of the stability of nature's operations. Against these conclusions, with all their theological consequences, it is in vain for scepticism to level its shafts.

The philosophy of Hume, as a whole, originated and fell with himself. A more partial and less daring scepticism might, probably, have gained many followers; but it is the inevitable result of every system, professing universal unbelief, to destroy itself. The man who by any process of reasoning involves every portion of human knowledge in doubt, instead of persuading any one to follow his conclusions, does little more than controvert his own principles by a "*reductio ad absurdum*." The real effect is not to make us doubt the validity of our knowledge, but to shake our confidence in the

philosophical, or rather unphilosophical axioms, by means of which such results could be obtained. "Universal scepticism," says Sir James Mackintosh, "involves a contradiction in terms. It is a belief that there can be no belief. It is an attempt of the mind to act without its structure, and by other laws than those to which its nature has subjected its operations. To reason without assenting to the principles on which reasoning is founded, is not unlike an effort to feel without nerves or to move without muscles. No man can be allowed to be an opponent in reasoning who does not set out with admitting all the principles, without the admission of which it is impossible to reason. It is, indeed, a puerile, nay, in the eye of wisdom, a childish play, to attempt either to establish or confute principles by argument, which every step of that argument must pre-suppose. The only difference between the two cases is, that he who tries to prove them, can do so only by taking them for granted; and that he who attempts to impugn them, falls at the very first step into a contradiction from which he never can rise."

Of the English *mysticism*, to which the last century gave rise, we can give but little account, inasmuch as it flowed more into the channel of religious than of philosophical speculation. The school of Swedenbourg made some advancement in our own country, as it did in other parts of Europe, and numbered a few cultivated minds amongst its

supporters. But the middle of the seventeenth century was the period in which the community began to be aroused from its religious lethargy to a new life and energy; and whatever tendency there might have been to seek for truth in the deeper feelings of our spiritual nature, it all flowed into the stream of religious excitement, which then became so much broader and deeper than it had been for ages before. The belief in Divine influence strongly characterized that movement, and the habit of looking within and reading the heart's religious experience was constantly encouraged; so that an element was at work, more or less throughout the whole of society, that necessarily took the place of those inward impulses, which, if not placed under the guidance of Christianity, would, in all human probability, have developed themselves in the rise of philosophical mysticism.

Here, then, we close what is more directly the historical portion of our subject. We have traced the progress of sensationalism and idealism up to the age in which we live, and seen the different forms of scepticism and mysticism to which their mutual contests have given rise. Our next, and still more important task will be, to exhibit in its various movements the advancement which the human reason has made during that half of the nineteenth century, which has now arrived almost at its termination.



## PART II.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

BEFORE we proceed onwards with our history, and bring it over the threshold of the present century, we must make a brief pause, in order to take a compendious view of the ground we have now hastily travelled over, and to collect together the results which may have been gathered up on the way. Looking at the philosophy of modern times in connexion with that which for almost two thousand years had preceded it, we see it bearing the marks of an independence which, since the days of Plato and Aristotle, had been altogether unknown. The scholastic ages in particular were marked by a well-nigh slavish deference to authority, an authority which was balanced with some degree of equality between Aristotle on the one hand, and the Pope on the other. Philosophy during this period was content, not only to be held in leading-strings, but to be nurtured and instructed by dogmatic theology, as an obedient child by its

parent or guardian. It was, at present, timid in all its movements, feeble in its efforts, and felt so much the need of extraneous support, that it willingly allowed, and even sanctioned, an appeal to those masters, who, the one in the ancient the other in the modern world, had succeeded in gaining the confidence, and then in subduing the reason of mankind.

The Reformation was a revolt against authority ; it presented the spectacle of the human reason once more asserting its independence, and indignantly bursting the chains by which it had so long been bound ; for whether we regard the movements which then took place in the religious, the political, or the philosophical world, they are all alike characterized by the same determination to shake off the trammels of servitude, to which the will of humanity had during many past ages submitted. It was the sixteenth century which witnessed the main heat of the battle of reform ; then it was that events which had long been brooding over society came to their crisis ; then that authorities which had before been only doubted were openly disavowed ; then that the first overthrow of intellectual and spiritual despotism was both given and received.

The *seventeenth* century presented another new page in the history of mankind. The arm of Bacon had given the first fatal stroke to the authority of Aristotle, and had stripped the laurels from the

brows of the hitherto invincible heroes, who taught the trivium and quadrivium of human learning; but it was not in the power of any one man to tear up all the ramifications into which the roots of the middle-age philosophy had extended themselves, and to reap even the first-fruits of the principles he might succeed in establishing. This was, in fact, the mission which the whole of the seventeenth century had to perform. Accordingly, as in the department of politics, it was chiefly occupied in shifting the old and worn-out institutions of the dark ages; as in the department of religion, it was employed in defining the power and authority which in matters of faith the individual mind ought to possess, and of which it had been unrighteously plundered; so also the main efforts of philosophy, during that century, were expended in clearing away the rubbish, which scholasticism had heaped up in the path of its successful advancement. So diligently was this object pursued by the Hobbists on the one side, and the Cartesians on the other, that before the century came to its close the worthless material of the old and crumbled edifice of the scholastics had well-nigh vanished, and the foundations were already laid for a new species of philosophy, not grounded upon the syllogism, but upon the *analysis of thought*. As a proof of this, be it remembered, that it was during the seventeenth century that Locke furnished the principles of the modern sensationalism, and Leibnitz the data which

afterwards expanded into all the phenomena of the German idealism. We may say, then, in few words, that the sixteenth century pulled down the scholastic edifice, leaving it a mass of ruins; and that the seventeenth cleared the ground, and laid the foundations for our modern philosophy.

We now see the *eighteenth* century ushered in under the most favourable auspices, and wait accordingly to inquire what was the office *it* had to perform in the development of philosophical truth. That office, in brief, was not to pull down but to rear up. The new foundations being already laid, the new systems sketched out, it had to test the data upon which they proceeded, to expand and mature their results, and, lastly, to shew their bearing upon all the various departments of human knowledge. One thing especially was achieved by this age, towards the independence of the human mind; and that was, the final disruption between philosophy and revelation, and the due assignment to each of their respective limits. Bacon and Descartes, although they were the first great abettors of the spirit of independence, yet never got beyond the influence of their theological system, or dared to assert for the child they had reared a complete freedom from all restraint. Locke and Leibnitz certainly evinced a far greater philosophical purity, both in the method they pursued and the fundamental principles they asserted, but it was not until the eighteenth century had brought those

principles to their maturity, that the authority of revelation in the department of philosophy was altogether overcome, and each was left to rest upon its own proper evidence.

The eighteenth century, in thus placing philosophical reasoning upon its true footing, succeeded in exhibiting both the excellencies and the defects of the various systems which the renewed energy of the human mind had originated. The service rendered thereby to the advancement of human knowledge was of the greatest importance. The state of philosophy previous to this trial which it underwent had been any thing but satisfactory; many of the prevailing systems gave such a practical exhibition of weakness and insufficiency that they threatened to involve society at large in the coldness and despair of universal scepticism. All this, however, was only preparing the way for the critical philosophy of the Kantian school, and in so doing contributed not a little to place metaphysical speculation upon a right basis. The writings of Kant, therefore, may be viewed as the flower of the philosophy of their age, forming in truth the boundary line between the metaphysics of the last and those of the present century. Such we may regard as an abstract of the advancement of philosophy from its revival down to the opening of the century in which we are now living.

It is not enough, however, for us here simply to take this superficial view of the progress of specu-

lative science during the two last eventful centuries; we need to look more closely into the *nature* of the speculations, with which they were filled, and to see in what manner they attempted to solve the great problems about which philosophy is conversant.

All intellectual philosophy of a fundamental character turns upon the two ideas of *thought* and *existence*. Thought represents the subject, existence the object, and the whole problem of philosophy is first to analyze the phenomena of the former, and then to determine what they unfold to us respecting the latter. There is a world of thought within us, there is a world of existence about us; what then is the exact relation which the one of these poles of philosophy holds to the other? Are thought and existence *eternally* opposed, or is there any point in which they perfectly coincide? Can thought ever be shewn to be an attribute of being, or can we trace existence up to that degree of sublimation where its very essence seems to be thought itself? Here, then, are the two data of all speculation—a subject and an object—consciousness with its phenomena, and being with its essential attributes—a self, and a not self. All philosophy works upon these materials, tries to understand them, to unfold their relations, if possible, to trace them to the point where they originate and where they unite. Such a point, it is true, we may not be destined, by scientific deduction, ever to reach; but still it is to the clearer development of this problem that the

tide of human speculation must ever perpetually roll forward. Chemical analysis may never discover the ultimate unity of matter—physiology may never arrive at the vital principle, still to these points they are ever struggling to attain. In the same manner, speculative philosophy aims at deducing *the one great principle of the universe*, and the nearer it gets to it the more perfect does it become.

Let us look at the history of this problem in modern times. The middle ages pursued the investigation of it in their own peculiar manner. All the speculation of the scholastic philosophers, it is well known, clustered around two centres—first, the ideal system of Aristotle, which was no other than an attempt to shew the relations of thought and existence with regard to our sense-perceptions; and, secondly, the controversy of the nominalists and the realists, which was simply to determine the point whether the real essence of external things is given in the impression they make upon us through the senses, or in the general idea we form of them by the reason. In both cases, therefore, the problem was to solve the mutual relations which thought and existence hold to each other.

This question, then, we may consider, was handed over undetermined to the speculators of more modern times; and the different methods of viewing it give us the key to the two opposed systems of philosophising with which our modern history is acquainted. The one system starts with

this problem,—Given, the real phenomena of existence to deduce from thence the nature and varieties of our thoughts and ideas. The other reverses the question, and puts it in this manner,—Given, the phenomena of our own minds to deduce from thence the reality and the nature of the world without. The one commences with the objective, and deduces from it the subjective; the other starting from the subjective, seeks to deduce the objective. If we take the simple product of sense as the starting point, and from that construct the world of ideas, our philosophy is of the former kind, and must be entirely empirical; if we begin with our own mental conceptions, and from them construct the world without, our philosophy, is of the latter kind, and must be, to a greater or less extent, rationalistic.

Hobbes and Gassendi, followed up by Locke, took the empirical direction, and from the analysis of sensation attempted to account for the whole mass of our ideas. According to the two former, man is entirely material, and all his mental phenomena consequently nought but corporal affections; according to Locke, however, human thoughts are inward images (ideas) of outward things—sometimes simple representations as in perception, and at other times modified representations as in reflection; so that the relation between the objective and subjective world is here perfectly determined, the latter being only a living picture

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of the former, and all truth consequently consisting in the inward representation, or idea, being perfectly correct. The sceptical results which Hume drew from this position were opposed on the part of the Scotch metaphysicians, by giving to certain fundamental principles of belief an independent subjective existence, by denying the doctrine of representative knowledge, and thus disturbing the fixed relation of causality which Locke and others had instituted between the outer and the inner world. The successors of Locke, however, both in France and England, went resolutely forward in the direction that was pointed out for them, until they landed in pure materialism—a doctrine in which thought and existence are made identical, not by tracing both up to their common source, but by cancelling all that is peculiar to the former, by making the mind itself merely a piece of material organization, and mental phenomena nothing but the motion of its particles. The climax of this school, therefore, was to solve the great problem of philosophy by blotting out one of its terms, and to regard matter as the only absolute and self-existent reality. Such was the result of the empirical theory ere the eighteenth century came to its close.

Descartes was the founder of the opposed or rationalistic method of philosophising. The relation between thought and existence was in his case expressed by the position “*Cogito ergo sum*,”

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a sentence in which the ultimate unity of the two was evidently implied, (inasmuch as the reality of the one was made to flow necessarily from the other,) while a phenomenal difference between them was admitted. Spinoza, however, carrying out the fundamental principle of Cartesianism asserted the *universal* identity of thought and existence, referring them both alike to the "Ens realissimum," the one universal substance of which both are only different modi. Hence the *rationale* of his assertion of the perfect parallelism between the inward processes of thought and the outward processes of nature.

Leibnitz, perceiving that the pantheism of Spinoza must superinduce the most rigid fatalism, and ultimately tear up the roots of all morality and religion, introduced the element of *power* into all the individual existences, of which he supposed the universe to be composed. If all things are modes of the Divine Being (Leibnitz contended) they must each and all contain the element of freedom, which is absolutely inherent in Deity, and consequently every atom or monad must comprehend the principle of its own self-development. His whole system of monadology may therefore be regarded as an answer to the inquiry of speculative philosophy, respecting the relations of thought and existence in the universe, constituting, in fact, one of the most ingenious methods ever devised for

tracing them both up to one fundamental principle.

Wolf gave the principles of Leibnitz popularity and extension, by systematizing and arranging them; but instead of expanding the fruitful germs of thought which that master mind had thrown out, he elaborated most carefully the form of his philosophy, and neglected the essence. Wolfism was, perhaps, the most complete attempt which was ever made to ground an entire system of rational philosophy upon the ordinary principles of logical reasoning; and if nominal definitions could give a perception of the real nature of the things defined, nothing more satisfactory and complete could be wished for, than the *Encyclopædia* of philosophy which he originated. It sought, however, to solve the problem of metaphysics simply by the analysis of our processes of thought, and never succeeded in finding a valid passage from thence into the world of objective reality. The great question of philosophy, therefore, was brought to a solution by the two opposed methods of philosophizing, in two altogether different ways. By the materialists, it was solved by making thought synonymous with matter in some of its peculiar affections;—by the idealists, on the other hand, by making matter homogeneous with thought, and accounting for the common principle of both, by means of the theory of monadology.

It was just at this point that Kant, seeing the errors on both sides, came forward with his reform, and by a searching criticism of man's cognitive faculty, shewed how impossible it was, by any process whatever, to arrive at a scientific knowledge of absolute existence at all. With regard to *material* existence, he proved that we can never go beyond phenomena, and that actual experience here marks the farthest limits of our knowledge. With regard to the pure conceptions which the reason strives to form respecting the essence of the soul, or the universe, or the Deity, he shewed that these were all based upon fallacious conclusions; so that the main result of his critique was to cut off the possibility of our ever coming (upon philosophical principles) to the point from whence thought and being alike spring, and where they are both identical. Kantism, therefore, was the destruction of metaphysics, properly so called; it removed the ground-problem beyond the reach of the human faculties, and sought to silence all transcendental speculation for the future. Instead, however, of altogether denying the absolute in human knowledge, Kant admitted it in connexion with those subjective and regulative principles of the human mind, which, though wanting objective reality, yet may be regarded as absolute to man, so long as he retains his present mode of existence. The attempts of the rationalistic method, then, to solve the problem

of philosophy, as far as the eighteenth century was concerned, ended in a well nigh completed system of subjective idealism. Whatever of absolute was admitted at all on scientific grounds, was confined to the human subjectivity; neither does this conclusion appear the less characteristic of the Kantian metaphysics because its effects were contravened by the authority of the practical reason.

These different and unsuccessful attempts to fathom the depths of thought and existence, together with the contradictory conclusions which they gave rise to, necessitated the appearance of scepticism, which from time to time either laughed or reasoned down whatever was untenable in the different philosophies, to which it was chiefly opposed: and then mysticism, still grasping after truth, but distrusting the more rational methods of attaining it, strove to dictate, as from some inward oracle, the fundamentals of human knowledge, as belonging to a region too lofty for the wings of reason ever to reach.

These, therefore, are the four elements which were brought over from the preceding ages to the nineteenth century; and it is the history of their farther progress, and of their various modifications as manifested within that portion of it which has already passed, to which we have now more especially to direct our attention. Whenever, therefore, we find the principle asserted, that truth is discoverable by the human faculties, but that

it must all ultimately rest upon the experience of the senses as its foundation, we shall regard this as a manifestation of empirical or *sensational* philosophy. When, on the contrary, we discover attempts to unfold truth grounded upon the native powers of the reason, independently of any element of outward experience, we shall attribute such attempts to the rationalistic method, or as we have termed it, to the philosophy which is characterised by the *idealistic* tendency. When, again, the power of discovering absolute truth is altogether disowned, we shall recognise in such disavowal the spirit of *scepticism*; and when, lastly, the capacity of man's natural faculties to attain it being denied, some other element within us is pointed out as supplying the deficiency both of reason and sense, whether that element be faith, feeling, or direct illumination, we shall refer such principles to the operation of *mysticism*.

Errors we shall have to point out in all the schools; but, notwithstanding these, we shall be quite sure to find some benefits conferred by each, so far as it has been a real and earnest striving after knowledge. Accordingly, after the analysis which each system has afforded of the materials that lie peculiarly within its own province, we shall only have to look for an eclectic philosophy that will combine the results of the whole, and indicate the advancement which the nineteenth century has made in the development of metaphysical truth.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN SENSATIONALISM.

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HITHERTO we have followed pretty closely the historical order in sketching the various systems of philosophy, which appeared from the revival of the speculative spirit in Europe down to the commencement of the present century. In rendering a faithful account of the philosophy of our own age, it will not be possible to follow so completely as we have done the chronological flow of events, since by so doing we should prevent the possibility of giving a classification of the different schools grounded upon their proper philosophical characteristics. In France, it is true, and to a great extent in Germany, the development of speculative opinions has gone on with so regular a step, that the chronological and the philosophical orders very nearly coincide; in these cases, therefore, we are not obliged, even when observing the latter order, to depart very widely from the former. In England, however, we look in vain for any *progressive* school of metaphysics, that has been steadily advancing as the age has

rolled round: we see nought but isolated efforts, many of which, indeed, are not wanting in some of the best characteristics of philosophical thinking, but which have far too little connexion among themselves to form what we might term an independent school of philosophy. In describing these efforts, it will not be our object to collect all the works and name all the authors who have contributed to the metaphysical literature of the country during this century, since the multiplicity of shades which their opinions present, would only confuse the reader in his endeavour to make a correct estimate of our philosophy as a whole, and offer very little instruction in return, but we shall rather attempt to point out the main directions in which speculation has hitherto seemed to flow; and we shall do this by bringing forward simply the more prominent writers to whom such speculations are chiefly indebted.

SECT. I.—*Of Modern Sensationalism in England.*

In taking a broad view of the different shades of *sensational* philosophy as the present century has thrown them before us, it is somewhat difficult to find a mode of classification by which we may include everything that bears upon it a scientific character. The best classification we have been able to make, proceeds upon the principle, that there are just three different



directions which it is possible to take in erecting a system of empiricism. *First*, we may pursue a purely metaphysical analysis, and attempt to shew, in this manner, that every notion springs from the senses, as the original channels through which the whole material of thought has been supplied. Or, *secondly*, waving this kind of abstruse analysis, we may fix our attention upon man's practical life, and furnish a whole system of ethical philosophy grounded on sensational principles. Or, *thirdly*, we may commence with a physiological investigation of the human frame, and from this seek to deduce the nature and the origin alike of all mental and moral phenomena. Those who take the first course, we shall term sensational metaphysicians; those who follow the second, sensational moralists; while the third class may be designated sensational physiologists.

(A.) SENSATIONAL METAPHYSICIANS.

In beginning with the first of these classes, that to which we have assigned the above designation, we are carried back at once to the writings of Locke as the model, upon which this kind of metaphysical analysis has for the most part been formed. We have already shewn the process by which some of the professed adherents of Locke's philosophy, both in England and France, strained his principles beyond their just limits into materialism itself. It is not to be

supposed, however, that such has been the case with *all* the followers of this school. There have been not a few who instead of hurrying forward into materialistic conclusions, determined to keep closely in the path, which was trodden by the master himself, and who contented themselves either with furnishing fresh proofs and illustrations of his main positions, or with shewing more fully in what way our more purely rational notions can be deduced from the original intimations of sense. In England, indeed, Locke, in his own genuine character, has long been the great philosophical authority; and, although the phraseology of our metaphysical writers has more recently been much modified by the school of Reid and his Scottish followers, yet the acute analytic spirit, which is so observable in Locke's own writings, has in some striking instances been revived, and led to many new though similar speculations on the origin of our ideas. We must not forget to mention, however, the very observable effect of Hartley's observations respecting the laws of association upon all the writers of the Lockian school since his time; for, although in many instances no mention has been made of that acute writer, yet the important part which is assigned by all to the phenomena of association clearly shews us, how much is owing to the views upon this subject, which he was the first to promulgate.

Perhaps there is no English writer since Locke

who has upon the whole theorized with so much ability on these topics, and analyzed our mental processes so acutely as the late Mr. James Mill, author of "An Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind," which appeared in the year 1829. We may regard this author, without doubt, as standing at the head of the sensational metaphysicians of the present day, and, consequently, may safely use his writings as the most complete existing representation of the partial success which has more recently attended philosophical investigations of this nature. We cannot do better, therefore, under the present head, than first of all to give a brief sketch of Mr. Mill's method of analysis, and then to point out in what respect, under the view of another and more spiritual system of philosophy, it may be regarded as unsatisfactory and incomplete. In accomplishing the former of these purposes, every facility is offered by the admirable order, brevity, and clearness, with which the whole work is pervaded, and which leaves hardly anything to be desired on the score of a philosophical style and arrangement. In accomplishing the latter, we shall attempt to use that impartiality, which is becoming, and, indeed, necessary, in all philosophical discussions.

Our author having stated that the main object of the philosophy of the human mind is to expound the more complex phenomena it presents, commences by laying down its simple states. The

first and foremost of these are, of course, *sensations*; respecting which little, if anything, new is said, except it be some very just remarks upon the sensational feelings which accompany the action of the muscles, and those which arise from the alimentary canal. Having finished his view of our sensations, he next comes to *ideas*, which he explains to be, copies or traces of sensations that remain after the sensations themselves cease. Respecting the formation of these he offers no theory, but only states the fact as indisputable, that such traces do exist. These two classes of feeling, then, form, according to Mill, the whole material of our thoughts and emotions.

The next point to be observed is, that our mental phenomena do not recur arbitrarily, but according to a certain order and arrangement, the law of which is termed the association of ideas. This law of our mental constitution is shewn to play the most momentous part in man's intellectual and moral development, causing our ideas to cluster together, and become at length indissolubly united, either in the synchronous or successive order, according, of course, as the sensations of which they are copies have been experienced synchronically or successively. In the former case they give rise to *complex notions*, in the latter to *trains of thought*.

The next important fact, is that of assigning to our sensations and ideas certain *names*, in order

that we may communicate them to others or retain them more easily for ourselves; under which head our author goes into a long and very luminous exposition of the origin and nature of the various parts of speech, of which all language consists. This, then, we may consider as the *groundwork* of Mill's whole analysis, the elementary processes consisting of sensation, ideation, association, and naming, while the rest of his work is occupied in shewing how from these elements all the complex phenomena of the human mind may be fully and satisfactorily explained. Into this part of the analysis we shall now briefly enter, giving the principal conclusions, that are arrived at, in our own words.

First of all, *consciousness*, inasmuch as it applies generally to every mental phenomenon, is simply a generic term, under which all the subordinate classes of feeling are included, and which can no more contain any element different from the feelings themselves, than any other genus can contain essentially aught that is not in its species.

*Conception*, is likewise a generic term, only less extensive than consciousness; inasmuch as the latter is a universal name to include all mental phenomena, whether sensations or ideas, while the former is the name of a class of phenomena comprehending ideas only.

*Imagination* is the same as conception, with this simple difference, — that, whereas conception is

applied as a generic term to imply individual ideas, imagination is only applied to trains of ideas, which hang together by the law of association. When I am conscious of *one* idea in the mind, I conceive ; when I am conscious of a succession, I imagine.

*Classification*, or *generalization*, a process which has given rise to so much metaphysical discussion, is easily explained. I give a name to an individual ; I then apply the same term to another individual of a similar kind ; then to a third, and a fourth, and so on, until the term by the indissoluble law of association calls up indefinitely any of the individuals, to which I have severally applied it. Thus, a general term is not the mark of a reality, as the realists supposed, nor is it a word without any idea attached to it at all, as the nominalists assert ; but it is the mark with which an indefinite number of simple ideas is associated, and under which they become combined.

*Abstraction*, is a somewhat different process. We experience a given sensation in connexion with different clusters of qualities, as a black man, a black horse, a black eagle : we give this sensation a name, say "*black*," in order to note it, and we *connote* or name with it the particular cluster, to which in any given case it is applied. In some instances, however, we drop the connotation, and, in order to shew this, we add some mark to the term which expresses the original sensation. Thus

we may think of *black*, without assigning anything which is black, and then to mark the fact of all connotation being dropped, we add *ness* to it, and form the abstract term blackness. On this principle, then, abstractions are simply concrete terms with the connotation dropped.

*Memory* is an important phenomenon, but by no means an original faculty. It contains, first, the idea of the thing remembered, and secondly, the idea of my having seen it. The former element is easily accounted for by association, but the latter element is more complex. This is found, on analyzing it, to consist of three things, —the present or remembering self, the former or remembered self, and the train of consciousness which intervenes between them, and identifies the two selves as being the same personality. To explain fully, therefore, the nature of memory, we have to await the analysis of the ideas of personal identity and of time.

*Belief* is the next point to be noticed, which is of three kinds, — Belief in events or of real existences, belief in testimony, and belief in the truth of propositions. The first kind of belief is a case of very close and immediate association. This we see illustrated in the belief of our acquired perceptions, where we indissolubly associate certain distances, &c., with certain shades of colouring. The same principle holds good with respect to our belief in the existence of a cause

as antecedent to every effect, and of matter as the ultimate cause at which our association stops. The second kind of belief, that which we yield to testimony, is also a case of association, depending equally upon experience, inasmuch as we firmly associate reality with that species of testimony, which we have previously found to be uniformly true. The third kind of belief, that of the truth of propositions, is synonymous with judgment, which, in fact, is nothing more than our recognition of the coincidence that exists in the meaning of two names. Thus, when I say, "Man is a rational animal," I simply recognise the fact, that the two names, man and rational animal, stand for the same thing. Last of all, *ratiocination* is to be regarded as a case of judgment in its most perfect and extended form, which thus completes the analysis of our intellectual powers, and reduces them all to the elements which we have just before indicated.

Having finished this portion of his task, the author proceeds to the investigation of those *terms*, which, in all metaphysical systems, have been generally considered the most remarkable, as well as most difficult of explanation. Beginning with terms which express relation, he first shews the notion of *a line*, to be involved partly in the sensations of touch, and partly in those of a muscular nature, which accompany the extending of the arm. The notions of *cause* and *effect* are explained to



be synonymous with the antecedence and consequence of phenomena. The idea of *extension* is supposed to be a modification of those sensations by which we conceive of lines as greater or less; and then, lastly, those abstract terms which we apply to objects as being related to each other in respect of *quantity* or *quality*, are so analyzed, as to appear equally dependent with the rest upon the aid of experience.

Next to relative terms, he proceeds to prove that *numbers* are simply marks to shew that one sensation comes after another; that *privative* terms generally are merely indicative of the absence of sensations, or rather expressive of that state of consciousness, which the absence of sensations produces; that *space* being an instance of such terms, is merely the privation or absence of bulk; and that the term *infinity* indicates that state of consciousness in which the idea of *one unit more*, if it be number, or of *one portion more* if it be extension, is closely associated with every preceding number or portion that has gone before it. The only three important terms that now remain, are time, motion, and identity.

*Time*, according to Mr. Mill, is derived from the succession of our sensations. In this succession there is always something past, something present, and something future, which, by dropping the connotation and adding the sign, gives us pastness, presentness, and futureness. The combination of

these three gives rise to all that is contained in our idea of time. It is, to use the author's own language, a single-worded abstract, involving the meaning of these three several abstracts. *Motion*, again, is the abstract idea of moving. In the idea of a body moving, there are the ideas of the body itself, of position, of a line, and of succession, all of which may be accounted for on sensational principles. Take, then, a number of moving bodies, drop the connotation, and we have the whole idea of motion. Lastly, *identity*, is merely another term for *sameness*, and this, again, is simply expressive of a certain case of belief, the evidence of which varies with the subject, but which in every case arises from association, and, consequently, from experience.

With regard to the *active powers*, our author's analysis of these is equally ingenious with that of the intellectual. Sensations are, some pleasurable, and others painful: when, therefore, we recall them, the ideas they give rise to must also be either of a pleasurable or painful nature. Our state of consciousness, however, in the sensation is essentially different from that in the idea, inasmuch as we cannot revive the actual pleasure or pain which were caused by the bodily affection, but only the recollection of them. The *idea* of pleasure, therefore, in contradistinction to the *sensation* of pleasure, we term desire; the idea of pain, aversion.

Sometimes, again, pleasure or pain arises from an immediate cause, and sometimes from a remote: the lash of the executioner is an instance of the one, the sentence of the judge the other, since in this latter case the pain comes at one remove from the actual sensational feeling. In the same manner pleasurable and painful *ideas*, that is, desires and aversions, often come from remote causes, while they derive still further variations from being contemplated as past or future. In these few principles we have, according to Mill, the basis of all the passions, desires, and emotions of the human mind, and only need to search further into the more remote causes, from which they spring, in order to gain a complete analysis of this part of our constitution.

Amongst these causes we find that certain objects, by virtue of particular associations with them, excite in us the feeling that we term the sublime and the beautiful; whilst other pleasurable or painful feelings, which arise as consequent, either upon our own actions or those of our fellow-creatures, have acquired the name of the moral sentiments. Here, therefore, we have the foundation of all æsthetical and moral philosophy.

With regard to the *will*, which is usually considered as constituting so large an element in our moral life, our author considers that it is synonymous with desire; that an action is said to be willed when it is desired as the means to a certain

end, or rather, when it is associated as a cause with pleasure as the effect; and that the muscular actions of the body, which are usually termed voluntary, are, in fact, *necessarily* consequent upon certain sensations or ideas, which we can only control through the medium of the great law of association. Such is a brief and necessarily imperfect outline of Mill's analysis. To estimate it fully, it must be read and studied throughout; but yet, the above sketch may be sufficient to shew the kind of philosophy which it advocates, although it very inadequately conveys the arguments by which it is supported.

Now, in offering some remarks upon this system, we must first of all inquire, what the starting point is from which it proceeds, and what the elements which are taken for granted as being primary and unresolvable; because upon this first step the whole character of any philosophical system mainly depends. In looking to this point we see at once, that the phenomena of mind in this system are not traced to any single, and uniform source. The French sensationalists, as we shall hereafter have occasion to shew, started with the simple product of sense, as the sole groundwork of all mental manifestation, and attempted to prove that every phenomenon is a movement, more or less disguised, of this one faculty. In the work before us, on the contrary, there are clearly *two* primitive elements brought forward, sensations and ideas; and conse-

quently two original and corresponding powers of mind, namely, sensation, and what might be analogically termed *ideation*. Of these, however, sensation occupies by far the superior place, inasmuch as it furnishes all the original materials of our thoughts, while an idea is taken to signify not (as Locke would have it) everything about which the mind can be occupied, but simply the traces of our sensations, which are left after the outward cause is removed.

Now, in this admitted faculty of forming *ideas* of things, there is more involved, we imagine, than seems in the work before us to be supposed. *E. g.* Instead of reducing memory and judgment to the two elements above stated (that of sensations and ideas), we much doubt whether both of those faculties are not involved as simpler elements in the process of ideation itself. An idea, it is affirmed, is the trace or copy of a sensation. But the question is, how am I to know without the aid of memory, that there ever was a sensation which preceded it; or, in other words, how am I to refer the state of consciousness, in which I exist when I have an idea, to a former state, in which I existed when I had a sensation? In order to know that the idea has anything to do with a previous sensation, there must be a consciousness of the fact, that something *was* in my mind as well as the fact, that something *is* in it; and to know this requires the power we term memory—a power which consciously

connects the past with the present, and without which consequently it would be impossible for the very theory of ideation ever to be imagined. Again, if an idea be a trace or relic of a sensation, the knowledge of this involves not only memory, but also a *comparison* between two states of consciousness. If no comparison is made how am I justified in saying that my idea is a trace of, or has anything to do with, a sensation? but if a comparison is made, then there must be some mental power or process, by which such relations are observed, and this process we term a judgment. By no conceivable method could memory and judgment arise simply from the successive consciousness of sensations and ideas, for those successive states of mind must have eternally remained *separate* and *isolated* points in our being, had not the *power* of memory and the *power* of judgment united them into a continued and connected stream of conscious existence. We cannot but suspect, therefore, that Mr. Mill has explained the simple by the complex, rather than the complex by the simple.

When we come, however, to the deduction of our purely intellectual notions, there are still greater objections that arise in the mind against the conclusions of the work before us. In this department the peculiar theory, which is maintained, of cause and effect lies at the foundation of almost all the other results. Mr. Mill considers it proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, nay, since the

days of Brown, to have become almost axiomatic, that cause and effect imply nothing more than uniform precedence and consequence. This, however, we regard as far too bold and hasty an assumption, when we consider that the doctrine referred to is denied almost universally by the German metaphysicians; when we hear one of the greatest thinkers of our day calling it "a fantastical theory which gives a denial to universal belief, and to facts; a theory destructive of all true metaphysics;"\* and when we find the first philosopher of the age describing Brown's theory as one "*in which the whole train of argument is vitiated by one enormous oversight, the omission, namely, of a distinct and immediate personal consciousness of causation in his enumeration of that sequence of events, by which the volition of the mind is made to terminate in the motion of material objects.*"† We contend, as will be more fully explained elsewhere, that the conscious effort of our own will gives us the distinct idea of *power* in causation, which then becomes to us the type of those vast ever-working powers of the universe, by which we are surrounded, the foundation of our confidence in the uniformity of nature, and the basis of our belief in the great First Cause of all things.

\* *Vide* Victor Cousin, in his Preface to the Remains of M. de Biran.

† *Vide* Sir John Herschel's Treatise on Astronomy, in the Cabinet Cyclop., p. 232.

If, therefore, the fundamental principle on which so much is built up is shaken, the analysis of some other of our most important ideas becomes vastly modified. Let us take that of *substance*, which our author conceives to be a case of indissoluble association, arising from the inveterate habit, we have gradually formed, of assigning a ground or cause to all phenomena. According to this theory, we may talk about *clusters* of sensations, but to talk about substance, matter, substratum, or anything of this kind, is merely giving objective existence to a pure imagination of our own minds. "To each of the sensations," says Mr. Mill, "which we receive from a particular object, we annex in our imagination a *cause*, and to these several causes we annex a cause common to all, and mark it with the name substratum." We have arrived, therefore, if this be true, at pure Berkleian idealism, and the sceptic may now come and chastise us for our folly in believing anything so unreal as a material world.

But, we doubt not, our author would have repudiated these sceptical conclusions, and protested that he was far from rejecting the real existence of matter. On what ground, then, does he make this protest? Is it sufficient to say that his association of ideas is so strong that he cannot help assigning, as antecedent or cause to such associations, *something that really exists*? Is it not clear that the sceptic may shatter this argument at once by assigning a thousand associations, to which no reality whatever can be



attached? Has not many a man, for example, closely associated with his fear at being alone in the dark the conception of a goblin or ghost? Why is it, then, that he still holds to his practical conviction of a material world, while he laughs at the goblin, both being similarly cases of strong association? It cannot be because the association in the one instance is so much stronger than in the other, for such is not actually the case. Should we not rather say, " My belief in a material world is simple and indestructible, it can be traced back to my earliest conscious being, it has never been strengthened by accumulated associations, never weakened by any subversive arguments, nay, it is a necessary element in the relation I feel between my conscious self, and that around me which is not-self; between the subjective and the objective element in every sensation, I have experienced, from my earliest existence to the present hour."

Instead, therefore, of reducing perception, as Mr. Mill does, to a case of strong association, we contend, with the philosopher of Scotland, that it implies the existence of another faculty, higher than sensation; that it contains a primitive *judgment*, in which the idea of substance is involved without the aid of association at all. The whole doctrine of belief in real existences, as here stated, proceeds upon the supposition that it is the superior *vividness* of the idea, or strength of the association that constitutes our confidence in objective reality.

These two facts, however—1st, that the most insignificant sensation brings conviction, while the most vivid pictures of imagination do not, and, 2dly, that one single case of conjunction produces belief in the relation of cause and effect, as firmly as a thousand—have never on this hypothesis been adequately explained.

To go at length over the analysis of the other notions which are adduced, such as infinity, time, space, &c., would carry us further into the discussion of these questions than is compatible with our present plan. It has been one of the many grand results of a spiritual and more reflective philosophy, however, to shew, that the idea of *the absolute* plainly marks one great division of our knowledge; that the infinite stands in such a manner opposed to the finite, as that the conception of the former must necessarily be involved in the latter; and that time and space are both particular modifications, which the notions of the finite and infinite undergo. To any theory, like that of Mill's, which places the idea of body, substance, or bulk at the foundation of that of space, there lies the insuperable objection, that we cannot conceive of body at all except as it exists in space, and that, although we may require to be brought into contact with body prior to our forming the conception of space, yet that *logically* the former must be posterior to, because it involves the notion of the latter. In the same manner against any theory, which reduces time simply to

the succession of events, there lies the similar objection, that if you take away the notion of time, no succession is possible, inasmuch as all succession implies continued duration between the points of consciousness, just in the same manner as body implies continued space between the atoms of which it is composed. As to the notion of *identity* or self, we should argue that this too cannot be deduced from experience, because it is already implied in every act of consciousness. Without this notion there would be no unity in our sensations or ideas, no chain to bind them together; our conscious existence would be only a series of unconnected impressions, and the experience of the last hour might belong to a different being from that of the present. While, therefore, we cannot but read with much admiration many of the acute and able analyses of notions, with which the work we are considering abounds, yet, in those cases where our primitive judgments and the ideas flowing from them are concerned, we cannot but consider, that the author has been led astray from the truth by the theory he was labouring to sustain.

The view which Mr. Mill has taken of the intellectual powers could not but have some influence upon his theory of the *emotions*. Sensations and emotions are regarded by him as generically synonymous, so that the feeling produced by the lash of an executioner, and that produced by the sentence of the judge are each spoken of as a sensation, the

one arising from an immediate the other from a remote cause. These two classes of feelings, on the other hand, we regard as totally dissimilar. The one arises immediately from the presence of an external object, the other, being an *emotion*, has nothing to do with such object; the one comes from without, the other from within; the one follows upon an affection of the nerves, the other from a conception of the mind; the one is entirely uncontrollable so long as the bodily affection lasts, the other is, to a great extent, under the dominion of the will. The only *sensation*, which the judge produces, is occasioned by the air set in motion by his organs of speech acting on the tympanum of the prisoner's ear; but it is the *meaning* of the words he utters, acting upon the intellect, that sends a thrill of shuddering *emotion* through his frame. We can conceive of no system of psychology rendering an adequate view of all the phenomena of our nature, unless the broad line of distinction is plainly marked between the sensitive and the emotional faculty. This might be shewn far more clearly in the case of the moral emotions than any other; into these, however, we shall now forbear to enter, inasmuch as the ethics of sensationalism will come more fully before us in the next section.

There is one point, however, we would further touch upon, and that is the account which our author gives us of *the will*. According to this

account, it seems to us impossible to avoid drawing the conclusion, that human life is altogether the sport of circumstantial fatalism. The elements of volition, on his theory, are sensations, ideas, and motives, leading lastly to muscular movements of the frame. First, I experience a sensation; next, I am conscious of this sensation leaving its trace behind it, and forming an idea; thirdly, the power of association comes to bear upon the matter, and leads me to connect certain actions of my own as causes, with pleasure as the result, thus constituting a motive; then, lastly, the internal feeling of pleasure, I experience, produces the muscular movements which we know to accompany volition. Every step in the process of human action, it will be seen, is here passive and uncontrollable. The sensation is so in the first instance, the idea is so in the next, that peculiar association by which a desire or motive is created is so in the third, and the power which our internal feelings have over the muscular frame is so in the last. The defect in the process here described is what Sir J. Herschel terms the "enormous oversight" of leaving out our *distinct and personal consciousness of causation*. Every man assuredly acts on the conviction, that he is in himself a finite power, or cause of such a nature, that he can, if he choose, oppose the instinctive impulses of sense, and modify outward circumstances by his own voluntary determination. Amidst all the influence of external agents upon us, we still

feel perfectly conscious, that we can originate action from within, that we can form purposes, stay their execution, make a final determination, and then pass from the inward volition to the outward execution, which execution again we can continue or suspend by means of the same will which gave it a commencement. The human mind, therefore, is something independent of its circumstances; it is a spontaneous, self-regulating existence; a distinct personality, the very essence of which consists in activity. Accordingly the fundamental error, as we think, of all systems of sensationalism consists in taking for granted, that *mind*, until the channels of sense convey to it life and feeling, is a nonentity, or at any rate a mere passive entity; whilst in fact we can no more conceive of it without thought and action, than we can of matter without figure and extension. This point, however, will again recur, so that we shall for the present pursue it no further.

The only other thing, we have now to remark is the total silence which is observed by our author upon man's religious faculty. That the existence of God, the infinite essence, the "*causa causarum*," could not be deduced on the principles laid down in the work before us, is manifest; because even if we possessed the distinct conception, its whole objective reality would be destroyed by reducing it, as must be the case, to a strong instance of the power of association, leading us to assign a cause to all

phenomena. That the religious *emotions*, moreover, must in this philosophy all be considered as purely pathological, is equally clear, because emotions and sensations are viewed as being altogether homogeneous. Whether the author would have sanctioned such inferences, I have no means whatever of judging, but unless I have greatly mistaken his principles, the application of correct logic must necessarily bring such conclusions sooner or later to light.

The whole of our objections, then, may now be concentrated in a single remark. The author, it is evident, fixed his attention upon one of the great fundamental facts of our consciousness, that of finite nature operating upon us through the channels of sense. In looking stedfastly to this fact, he succeeded in analysing many phenomena, that might otherwise have eluded all observation; but in the meantime he entirely lost sight of the other two fundamental notions, those of the active self and the infinite; through the omission of which he reduced our pure and primitive ideas to the character of mere abstractions, and the energy of the will to that of a passive sensational feeling.

The error committed is the exact opposite of that which Kant committed before him. The German philosopher, in discovering all the *forms* of the understanding, neglected sufficiently to analyse the *matter*; the English philosopher, on

the contrary, in directing his attention almost exclusively to the matter, well nigh entirely neglected the form. Many thanks, however, are still due to him for his labours, inasmuch as they give one tack to the vessel, in which the world's philosophy is sailing, which, while it takes that vessel for a time from its true course, will, nevertheless, aid in bringing it at last so much further on its way to the land where truth reposes. Analysis, as we have before remarked, to be close and penetrating, must give rise to error as well as to truth ; it only needs an enlightened eclecticism to grasp the one, and to reject the other.

We have entered into Mr. Mill's analysis somewhat more fully than we should have done, (considering that our design is to give a brief historical sketch of the different systems of philosophy with their comparative merits, rather than to dwell at length upon the works of particular authors,) because it is so able a representative of the advanced school of Locke, as existing in England during the present century. Not that we mean to say, that Locke and Mill in all respects coincide. So far from that, the points of difference are very considerable, and on many questions, as that of the classification of the intellectual powers, quite dissimilar ; but still both the method and the nature of the analysis so closely resemble each other in the two cases, that they are at once seen to belong to the same school of philosophy.



The precise position, which Mill would take in the scale of sensationalism is about midway between Locke on the one hand, and the French Ideologists on the other. The latter of these regard all mental operations as being different forms of sensation; the former, although looking upon the senses as the primary source, from whence the *material* of our knowledge is derived, yet strongly asserts the existence of certain active faculties, by which this material is moulded; the author now before us, differing from both, admits only sensations and ideas, comprehending under these more than the French philosophers, but by no means so much as our great English metaphysician would contend for. Other writers of the same class have wavered somewhere between these two points, but they all retain such a degree of resemblance to each other, that to adduce them here would be only to reproduce similar doctrines under varied forms, and then to urge against them similar objections; neither, indeed, were we to attempt it, could we bring forward any authors, who have set forth the main doctrines themselves with so much clearness and force of reasoning, as the one we have already examined. There is one work, however, recently published, of so great and unquestionable merit, that it were wrong to omit a distinct mention of it, in estimating the sensational phenomena of the present age,—I mean a work entitled, “A system of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive,” by

John Stuart Mill. The author, it is true, aims simply at discovering and expounding the proper methods of investigating truth, without pledging himself to any system of speculative philosophy; but still there are so many points of a speculative nature touched upon, all in the spirit of the "Analysis" above considered, that he must necessarily be regarded as a partisan of the modern Lockian school of metaphysics. The evidences of his adherence to this school are scattered more or less throughout the whole work. Let us adduce one or two examples.

First, in his discussion of the real meaning to be attached to the term substance, he embraces the opportunity of placing the science of ontology entirely beyond the reach of the human faculties. Not, indeed, that he has pretended to enter into the full merits of the case, since that would have been foreign to the object of his whole work; but the view he takes of the question, "*en passant*," implies, that we have no right to assume any knowledge as asserting objective validity, which lies, as that of substance does, without the range of our sense perceptions, and rests upon purely rational or intuitive evidence. According to this view of the question, we may understand somewhat of qualities, since they come to us as actual phenomena, but we can know nothing of substance, since, if it exist, it is hidden behind a screen of impenetrable obscurity.

Now we believe that a thorough analysis of the case shews, that *reason* has as much right to assure us of the nature, and existence of being or substance, as perception has to assure us of the phenomena that we term qualities; that just in the same manner as we have an outward intuition of the one by the senses, so we have an inward intuition of the other by the reason. The cognisance of attributes by perception is as much a *subjective process*, as much a part of my inward consciousness, as is the cognisance of matter or substance by the reason; and if we deny the validity of the latter, there is no superior evidence why we should accept that of the former. As well may we, in fact, reject the quality itself as an objective phenomenon, as the substratum in which it adheres. We know the *properties* of the external world, says our author, because we have sensations which convey them. But what are sensations except states of mind? If a state of mind termed *sensation* can give us the knowledge of properties, why may not a state of mind termed intuition or reason give us the knowledge of substance? Reason has as much right to take us out of ourselves as perception, and if the one cannot assert objective validity, neither can the other. There is no valid medium, therefore, as it seems to us, between complete subjective idealism, like that of Fichte, on the one side, and the admission of ontology as a proper branch of scientific investigation on the other.

Another very decisive evidence of the author's sensational tendency is found in his support of Brown's theory of causation. In no work with which we are acquainted is the law of causality so ingeniously and plausibly traced to experience as in this ; and in none is the whole theory put in a more forcible and unobjectionable light. We still think, however, that he has left out the one important link in his analysis, to which we have before referred, that of a personal consciousness of *power*.

Instead, then, of resting the evidence of this law upon a simple induction of empirical facts, we should trace its establishment to a process of the following nature. Every man, when he produces change upon the outer world, is conscious of putting forth a *power* in volition, which power is exerted upon the external object. If the same power be again put forth in similar circumstances, he knows intuitively, that the same change will take place. Hence the notion of *power*, put forth by some cause, is associated with the perception of *every* effect ; and the force emanating from our own will becomes the type upon which we conceive of power, as universally exerted in the production of every other possible phenomenon. Thus the law of causation primarily emanates from our own volition, and being expanded by the aid of experience, at length assumes the form of a universal principle, applicable to all the phenomena

of the universe. To this subject, however, we shall again return.

Another aspect of Mr. Mill's sensationalism is given in his controversy with Prof. Whewell respecting the foundations of mathematical reasoning. We are aware that the side he defends is strengthened by the name of Dugald Stewart, and some other writers of high standing in the philosophical world; but, nevertheless, we are unable to confess ourselves convinced by the whole line of argument he has employed. The point of the controversy is this—What is the ground of belief in mathematical axioms? Are they experimental truths, *i. e.*, generalizations from experience, or are they necessary truths, arising from the *a priori* intuition of the human reason? Mill asserts the former to be the case, Whewell contends for the latter.

The discussion of the question, which when expanded might occupy a volume, virtually concentrates itself upon two points. It is argued, first by the spiritualist, that an experimental truth must be one, that is cognisable by the senses; and that, as this is not the case with mathematical axioms, they must necessarily be removed beyond the limits of mere empiricism. Take, for example, the axiom, that two straight lines cannot enclose space, even if they be *prolonged to infinity*. Were this a truth of simple observation (it is contended), we could never be assured of its accuracy, because

we can never see an instance in which two intersecting lines are *infinitely* produced. Whence, then, comes the conviction that, supposing them to be so, still there is a necessity that they should present just the same relative properties? To this it is replied in the work before us, that mathematical truths are such as can be painted on the imagination to any extent; that although we can never *see* two lines infinitely produced, yet we can conceive them to be so; and that, by a kind of internal observation we become convinced that they will always hold the same relations to each other, as by the aid of direct sensation we perceive them to hold on a small scale.

That there is much ingenuity in this theory must be freely admitted, but still it is open to some objection. Let us allow, for argument's sake, that a mental picture of all possible lines and angles may be depicted on the imagination. This picture must either represent cases, which fall *within* the actual limits of our experience, or cases which lie entirely *beyond* them. The former representation may be referred simply to the power of conception, or (as Mr. Mill might call it) ideation. Its result is an *idea* made from the relics of the sensation, and answering accurately to it. So far, therefore, there is nothing to serve the cause of the sensationalist; as *all* would admit that we may have an experimental idea of anything, of which we can have a sensation. If, however, we depict what

we have never witnessed "*in sensu*," (as, for example, the case above quoted, of two intersecting lines infinitely produced,) then the question comes, What law, or what necessity does this representation follow? Mr. Mill would explain it by saying, that the actual experience we have in the one case leads us to imagine the same relations to hold good in the other, that lies beyond experience. But here the very stress of the difficulty is untouched, for the inquiry still returns,—Why should our imagination be thus bounded by sense? Why are we necessitated to conceive of these lines and angles in definite and particular relations? In all other subjects the imagination roves at will, and forms relations entirely at variance with all experience. Why not in this subject also? *Actual* experience, it is allowed, could never shew us, that two *infinite* intersecting lines would never meet;—why, then, may we not imagine them as meeting; or on what is grounded the subjective *necessity* of depicting them eternally diverging? It appears to us, that there is but one explanation of the matter, namely, that *reason* forbids it. Once get beyond the bounds of sense, once allow imagination to take the thing into its own hands, and we see not that, in this case more than in any other, it would be bound to follow the dictates of experience, or that its conceptions can properly be limited by anything, except by the very laws of our mental constitution.

Let any one ask himself, what it is which gives us the conviction, that the relations of the experimental case will precisely answer to those of the imaginary and supersensual? It is not enough to say, that experience forbids the supposition, that the relations should vary in the two instances, for with the latter instance, experience confessedly has nothing to do. Such a conviction cannot possibly arise except from the fact, that the *a priori* forms of the understanding itself compel us to conceive of the relation of the lines in no other way, whether they be matters of experience, or whether they be not. In reply, therefore, to Mr. Mill's argument, that the relations of figures lying beyond experience are imaginary inductions from those which lie within experience, we urge that the moment the empirical boundary is overstepped, all such inductions must be valueless; and that conviction can only now arise from the *necessity* of the case, which necessity is based upon the ground-forms of the understanding.

We must come, however, to the second great argument which the spiritualist employs, that, namely, arising from the *universality* and *necessity* of mathematical axioms. These two attributes, it is argued, could never flow from experience, inasmuch as no experience can extend to all possible cases, and become the voucher for universal and necessary truth. To this Mr. Mill replies, that the necessity of a thing simply means the inconceiv-



ableness of its being otherwise, and that this inconceivableness all arises from the strength of the opposite associations.

Now, if *mere* association can produce the feeling of necessity and universality, respecting which we are treating, then it must produce it alike in every case, where the association has been constant and uniform. For example, we have always associated snow with whiteness, and soot with blackness; according to Mill's theory, therefore, we ought to consider the one *necessarily* white, and the other *necessarily* black. This is not, however, the case; there is nothing inconceivable, nothing contradictory to our reason in black snow, or in white soot; nor would it do violence to our faculties if we were to witness both of them to-morrow. The necessity we feel in the case of an axiom,—such as, “that two right lines cannot enclose a space,” is altogether of a different nature. Here the word inconceivable, attached to the negation of the axiom, has a far more intense meaning than it has in the cases which Mill adduces; so much so, that it would do violence to our reason to suppose that negation to be for one moment possible. Let any one put together the two propositions, “Snow is white,” and “Two right lines cannot enclose a space,” and consider, whether their contradictories are in the same degree of inconceivableness. If they are found to be not so, then there must be some additional reason beside association, which creates

the idea of necessity in the latter. The cause of the difference, as it appears to us, is simply this, that the one would contradict my experience, the other would contradict my reason; the former axiom being an empirical induction, the latter being an *à priori* judgment.

We have brought forward these few theories from the work above mentioned, in order that they may serve as examples of the nature and spirit of Mr. Mill's sensationalism. Upon the whole, however, the sensational doctrines do not appear with nearly the same intensity, which they exhibit in the "Analysis of the Human Mind." In one passage particularly, the author very clearly expresses his doubt, whether the attempt at explaining all our abstruser sentiments, emotions, volitions, &c., by the laws of association, has been at all successful, and controverts the corresponding theory of, belief which is maintained in the "Analysis." Although, as we have seen, there are some points in the work to which we cannot agree, yet we cheerfully allow, that it must be placed among the very first efforts of philosophical thinking in our own country. We believe that the "System of Logic" is yet destined to bring forth beneficial results, which years to come will in all probability fail to exhaust.

We might just mention, before concluding this part of the section, that there have been many pleasing, though by no means profound writers,

who have from time to time grounded upon these sensational principles valuable works of a practical kind, adapted more especially to guide us aright in estimating the influence of circumstances over the human mind. As a specimen of these I might mention Dr. Henry M'Cormac's volume, entitled "The Philosophy of Human Nature, in its Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Relations." We find here the same theory of causation as we have already noticed, the same dogma respecting the origin of our ideas, the same fundamental principle respecting the nature of the moral faculty, as arising from experience and association, all asserted and reasoned upon, with only the very feeblest attempt at analysing or proving them. Notwithstanding this, however, the work is practically a useful one for general readers, and points out many facts in the constitution of man, which it is highly beneficial for us both to observe and to act upon.

As a whole, then, we might say, that this school of philosophy has borne much good fruit in its own peculiar department; for, although it is by no means adapted to cultivate the deeper religious feelings, nor to raise the mind to enthusiasm in the pursuit either of the beautiful or the good; yet it is well calculated to point out the mutual action and reaction of matter and mind, of the man and the outward world upon each other, and thus to advance that species of education, which consists

in so adapting our circumstances, as to aid us in our intellectual advancement, and in the performance of our moral duties. All the varied systems we shall bring under review, are, in fact, but pulsations of the great mind of humanity. They are all based upon some true idea, and each takes up some one department, which, owing to the concentration of mind upon it thus produced, is analyzed far more completely than could otherwise have been the case. The defect which one system labours under is soon supplied by the exertions of another, and the next age reaps the fruit, which they have both conspired to produce and to mature. We come now to consider the class of philosophers which we have termed

(B.) SENSATIONAL MORALISTS.

Although ethics do not, generally speaking, afford so much scope for speculative philosophy as those branches of mental analysis, to which we have just referred, yet it would occasion a considerable blank in our historical survey, were we to pass by the attempts, which have been made to philosophize on man's moral and practical life. That moral systems should be founded upon sensational principles is, perhaps, less to be wondered at, than that such principles should be employed in explaining the more complex phenomena of our intellectual being. Our *actions* are external, and refer for the most part to some or other of our

outward circumstances; hence, probably, arises the great tendency there is, to make the whole science of ethics turn upon outward laws or relationships, rather than upon any of our inward feelings or conceptions; and hence, too, the great importance of tracing our moral sentiments to that true and incontrovertible source of them, which exists in the primary elements of our constitution.

In studying moral philosophy *speculatively*, there are two different methods in which we may commence and carry on our investigations. *First*, we may begin by the study of *actions*, analyzing their qualities, and attempting to discover what it is which gives them the peculiarity, that we designate by the word *moral*; or, *secondly*, we may begin by studying our inward emotions, and endeavour from thence to detect the precise nature and ground of the moral feelings. The former of these we may term the objective, the latter the subjective method, and we shall have ere long to point out two distinct schools of sensational moralists, who have followed respectively one of these two methods in their philosophical speculations.

The influence of sensational principles upon both methods is at once obvious. First, consider their bearing upon the discussion, which has taken place, respecting the qualities of actions. One philosopher affirms, that by the exercise of his higher or rational faculty, he perceives in actions

certain moral distinctions, which are quite separate from any immediate tendency they may have to produce pleasure or pain ; while another contends that we possess a moral sense, which distinguishes ethical properties in actions, just as the natural senses distinguish material properties in objects. To the sensationalist, however, both these theories are totally inadmissible. As to our reason, he would argue, it can do nothing more than work up the matter which experience affords, and therefore, can discover no qualities distinct from those which come to us through the channels of sensation ; and as to the moral sense, it cannot be generically different from natural sense or sensation, but like all other emotions, is merely a particular form in which the latter is found to exist. Actions, therefore, morally speaking, can have only one set of qualities when viewed by the light of sensationalism, namely, those, by virtue of which we receive profit or loss, pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow.

Again, if we look to the subjective side of the question, it is equally evident, that, in studying the moral faculty, sensationalism at once puts its veto upon any theory, that implies the spontaneous action of the human mind ; that it makes every impulse come from without ; and that when carried to its legitimate conclusion, it merges human liberty entirely in an iron fate, consequent upon the supremacy of external circumstances. We shall now, therefore, briefly trace the influence of

sensational principles upon these two phases of ethical philosophy, as exhibited in our own country during the present century.

I. We begin with the *objective sensational ethics* of the present age. Locke, it is well known, in his zeal to oppose the doctrine of innate ideas, denied the existence of any original or innate practical principles, by which human action is governed; a conclusion against which Lord Shaftesbury and others very warmly protested. Notwithstanding this protest, Dr. Thomas Rutherford, following out the moral aspect of Locke's philosophy, soon worked it up into a defence of utilitarianism. With this view of the ground of moral relations David Hume coincided, and also, among English writers, Abraham Tucker, an especial admirer and follower of Locke. To these writers succeeded Archdeacon Paley, who published his work on Moral Philosophy, in the year 1785;—a work which from that period to the present has held the most distinguished place in *one* of the English universities at least, and has been extensively read and admired throughout the country. The utilitarian scheme of Paley, then, we may consider as the ethical phase of Locke's philosophy, which has principally occupied the public attention during the nineteenth century.

Paley's definition of virtue is well known to every moralist. He makes it "the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God for the

sake of eternal happiness." The will of God then is here stated as the most direct *rule* of morality which we possess. To find the *ground* of it we have only to ask what is the ground of that will? The ground of it, argues Paley, can be no other than the production of happiness to the creature, since we cannot conceive of God operating otherwise than benevolently. We may consider, therefore, the utility of an action to be the ultimate foundation of its moral excellence, and the test by which we know it to be in consonance with the Divine purpose. This mode of stating the matter, as it appears to us, virtually begs the whole question. The possible motives of the divine operation are all summed up in a single disjunctive syllogism—God must act malignantly, benevolently, or indifferently; but he cannot act malignantly or indifferently, therefore he must act benevolently. Undoubtedly, God ever acts benevolently; but does this syllogism exhaust the possible motives of the divine operation? Far from it. There is yet room for us to imagine an infinite number of grounds in the depths of the divine nature, from which the operations of Deity may originate.

Without making any further specific remarks, however, upon Paley, we shall proceed to offer a few observations upon utilitarianism itself, as an ethical system.

1. We affirm that utility could never be practically applied, as a safe and sufficient *rule* of human



action. For on the supposition that our actions are to be estimated and directed by their expediency, who, we ask, is to estimate or direct them? The consequences of every action, we perform, are either wholly or to a great extent unknown to us; they go on multiplying by the laws of our moral and intellectual nature far beyond the possibility of human sagacity to calculate; so that if we had to value each action according to this rule it would be impossible ever to know, with any approach to certainty, how much virtue or how much vice it really contained, how far it was morally right or how far morally wrong. As a *rule* of conduct, then, utility must be ever wavering and uncertain. However acutely, therefore, it might be argued that utility is the *ground* of morality and imparts to all actions the peculiar qualities which we attach to them as good or evil, still it is quite clear that we need some safer principle by which our practical life may be directed. Unless such a principle be afforded us, we may commit the greatest errors in morality while our intentions may have been perfectly sound and healthy.

To this argument it is by no means sufficient to answer, that utility is not to be estimated by the sagacity of any individual mind, but rather by the combined and general result of human experience; for this general experience is not applicable to the vast majority of individual actions at all, and if it were so, is still far too fluctuating to serve for an

absolute and imperative law. If men were to act on their own ideas of utility, we should have an infinity of moral laws, varying with their relative sagacity or folly; if they were to act on the general idea of utility, then we should find moral distinctions varying in every country, and with every different state of society. Utility, then, cannot be the universal *rule* of moral action; we go on further to shew that it can neither be the *ground* of it. To shew this, we affirm,

2. That the argument drawn from the fact, that utility in the case of inanimate or involuntary agents never produces in us the slightest degree of moral approbation, has never, as far as we are aware, been fully and satisfactorily answered. If utility were the whole foundation of moral distinctions, assuredly we ought to denominate everything virtuous which is in any way beneficial. On the contrary, the very fact that the notion of intelligence and will are to be *subjoined* before we can possibly regard utility as synonymous with morality, is a proof that something else is needed, ere we can account for the whole of what is contained in the notion of virtue. The argumentation may be briefly put as follows. If an agent is accounted virtuous simply because he subserves the general well-being, then a valuable machine, which confers great blessings upon society, is virtuous. By no means, replies the utilitarian, a machine is not an intelligent or a voluntary being at all, and hence stands altogether

without the limits of moral agency. On your own shewing then, we rejoin, there must be something or other in an action besides its mere utility, something implied in the idea of free agency and intelligence which gives it its moral character ; and it is *that something* which we contend for as an element that altogether destroys the system of mere expediency, which we are now considering.

3. This will be more clearly seen, when we consider that moral distinctions, if we trace them to their origin, do not apply directly to actions at all, but only to their motives. Our moral estimate of every action, purposed by a sound mind, is regulated entirely by the view we take of the intention, from which it springs. Many an act which is really useful is stamped by us as immoral, the very moment we perceive that the *design* of it was *evil* ; and many an act fraught with mischief and calamity is not only passed by uncensured, but is even applauded as virtuous, so soon as we distinctly perceive that it was done with a good intention. On the very same principle, one and the same action is often regarded as moral to-day, and immoral to-morrow ; not because we have discovered in the meantime any difference in its *tendency*, but because we have fresh light thrown upon the motive from which it sprang.

Observe, then, how the moral aspect of an action must be judged of, on the principle, that its excellence or turpitude arises out of the motive it springs

from. If we define a *motive* to be that, which immediately precedes and leads to effort, it is evident, that it cannot be anything external, but must consist in a particular state of feeling or emotion, since it is from this alone that action or effort can directly flow. A *moral* motive, accordingly, in opposition to an instinctive one, will be a state of feeling, which includes in it intelligence and design, since we always carefully exclude from the appellation of virtuous those acts which result from our purely instinctive or pathological affections. To estimate, then, the true morality of an action, instead of first looking to its direct tendency, respecting which we may be altogether deceived, we must follow it up to the motive from which it originated; this motive we must ascertain to be a state of feeling not pathological merely, but involving intelligence and design; and, lastly, we must perceive that the *design* itself is in accordance with our nature and destiny as accountable creatures. If this be an accurate analysis, the foundation-stone of morals is the great ruling law of our nature, by virtue of which we are impelled to the accomplishment of our destiny; which law, moreover, is but an expression of the will of God. Upon everything which God has created around us a law is visibly impressed, by which it has to fulfil its design; our law is that engraven upon the conscience, and embodied in the dictates of our moral nature. Here we have at once a sure ground of morality,

and a valid rule by which to direct all our practical life. Such an account of our actions, morally considered, it is needless to say, is quite incompatible with the doctrine of utility; not but that the great moral law may ultimately coincide with what is expedient, but still, as far as man is concerned, the law itself, as an expression of the divine will, must be regarded as the foundation of virtue; expediency can only be used at the very furthest as the test of it.

4. The most decisive ground of appeal, however, on all questions of this nature, is that of the human consciousness. Fundamental truths of our spiritual being cannot be *proved*; they must ultimately rest upon the natural history of the human mind, observed and investigated on the principle of all inductive philosophy. Is there, then, or is there not, in the human mind, an intuitive perception of duty or propriety, distinct from any calculations of profit and loss? Is there, or is there not, a feeling of approbation in the consciousness of having complied with duty, quite irrespective of the benefit which may accrue to ourselves or to any one else; and is there, or is there not, a feeling of self-condemnation or remorse when duty has been set at nought, although no injury may have been inflicted? We answer, there is no language of civilized men, in which the most unequivocal terms expressive of such facts of our moral nature are not found in abundance, and none in which they do

not stand quite distinct from the phraseology, by which men express their notions of the injurious and the useful. To describe, in poetic language, the beauty of individual actions, which have all the marks of disinterested virtue about them, does not suit the closer and more severely philosophical style which it is our aim here to preserve; the whole *argument*, however, is contained in this one sentiment—that if we investigate the facts of our own consciousness, or examine the words and actions of mankind at large, as evidences of their inward perceptions and feelings, we shall discover a class of moral emotions, which are excited by the contemplation simply of *right motives*, and that too before the slightest judgment is passed upon the utility of the action, to which such motives give birth.

Against this conclusion it is but idle speculation to inquire, whether a savage brought up in the woods and forests would manifest certain moral sensibilities at the sight of a detestable action. It is no more possible to argue correctly respecting our moral faculties from such a case, than it is to argue correctly respecting man's intellectual powers from the most degraded of our species, or to conclude, that because the human frame does not manifest certain physical powers, when sickly and decrepid, that therefore it cannot possess them in ordinary circumstances favourable to its full development. Paley, it is true, though employing

fallacious arguments of this kind, yet gave a higher tone to his moral system, than Hume had done before him, by presenting the nobler motives to virtue, which we derive from the hope of everlasting happiness; but still all the objections we have pointed out, we cannot but think, are opposed to the doctrine of utility as a *principle*, whether we take it in its wider or more contracted extent.

From the foregoing remarks, then, we conclude that utility can never give an unerring *rule* for the guidance of human actions; that it passes by all consideration of right or wrong *motives* in the estimate of human conduct; that it takes no account whatever of our moral *dispositions*; that it fails to explain the facts of our *consciousness*; and is consequently wholly insufficient as a theory to satisfy the phenomena of our moral life.

But we come now to notice another form, which the utilitarian principle has taken, and in which it has excited no little attention in our own country, as well as on the Continent of Europe,—I mean the philosophy of Bentham. Jeremy Bentham was born in London, in the year 1748, and at a very early age became a graduate of the university of Oxford. Whilst there he directed his attention to the study of law and the cognate branch of ethics, and during the last year of his stay in that city became an ardent admirer and investigator of the principle of utility, chiefly from reading the *Essay of Dr. Priestley upon Government*. In 1776 he

published a "Fragment on Government," and in 1789 appeared his grand work, entitled, "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation." The moral system which Bentham advocated in this latter work, and which he expanded more and more during a long and laborious life, at length came forth in the year 1834, in its most complete and at the same time most popular form, as a posthumous production, edited by Dr. Bowring, under the name of "Deontology."

The account of Bentham's proceedings in the development of his principles is given by his editor in the following terms,—“It was in the year 1789 that the ‘Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation’ appeared. Here, for the first time, are pains and pleasures separately defined, and regularly grouped; and the classification and definition of them is so complete for all ordinary purposes of moral and legislative investigation, that Mr. Bentham, in after life, found little to modify or to add to in the list. By the side of the pains and the pleasures, the corresponding motives are brought to view, and a clear and determinate idea attached to the springs of action by showing their separate operation. And, moreover, the author uncovers and sifts that phraseology which has done so much mischief in the field of right and wrong by the judgment of *motives*, instead of the judgment of conduct, so that the same motive is frequently spoken of in terms opposed to and incompatible



with one another. \* \* \* In the later years, however, of Mr. Bentham's life, he was far from deeming his analysis complete. He had not taken man's interests and man's desires into his list, and he employed the phraseology of utility instead of that of happiness."

In the year 1810, it appears, Bentham published his "Chrestomathia," the object of which was to shew in what manner all the various arts and sciences contribute to the production of human happiness. In 1817 appeared "The Table of the Springs of Action," in which the phraseology of utilitarianism is still retained, although the author was evidently working his moral system into a more close and definite form. Becoming now, however, dissatisfied with the term utility, as expressive of the ground-work of morality, he cast about for an expression which should convey his notion on the subject without the possibility of creating error or equivocation. Once he thought of proposing the term eudaimonology, again he employed the word felicitism, until at length, in the year 1822, in his "Codification Proposal," he decided on terming his moral theory "The greatest happiness principle," and to represent the practice of virtue as the art of maximising happiness. It is the complete exposition of this principle in its last and most approved phraseology, that forms the object of the work called "Deontology," to which we have just alluded.

The principles advocated under the name of deontology may be easily explained. The whole system takes its rise from the consideration, that man is capable of pleasures and pains, and that, from the calculation of these, all moral action proceeds. On this theory, good is a word synonymous with pleasure, evil synonymous with pain, and all happiness consists in the possession of the one, and the absence of the other. Give me, says the utilitarian teacher, give me the human sensibilities—joy and grief, pain and pleasure, and I will create a moral world. Pleasure and pain, then, the basis of our moral nature, are to be estimated according to their magnitude and extent; *magnitude*, referring to their intensity and duration; *extent*, depending on the number of persons who are affected by them. It is in the proper balancing of these, asserts Bentham, that all morality consists, and beyond this the words virtue and vice are emptiness and folly.

Pleasure or pain, however, may arise from two sources; it may arise from considerations affecting ourselves, or it may arise from the contemplation of *others*, the former being purely of a selfish nature, the latter being sympathetic. Hence originates a two-fold division of virtue into prudence and effective benevolence—both of them, however, alike having their ground in the pleasure we personally derive from their exercise. Prudence, again, is of two kinds, that which respects our-

selves, which our author terms self-regarding prudence, and that which respects others, which he terms extra-regarding prudence. Effective benevolence, also, is two-fold, positive and negative; the business of the former being to augment pleasure by voluntary exertion, that of the latter being to do the same by abstaining from action. Virtue, says Bentham, when separated from the pursuit of happiness, is absolutely nothing; and, accordingly, it is termed by him a fictitious entity. Inasmuch, also, as no one is supposed to have any motive for action different from the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, we have the deontological doctrine educed, that every motive is abstractedly good, and that evil has to do with nothing but our actions or dispositions. In a word, we are to imagine, that man has originally no moral sentiment whatever, that he has no idea of one thing being right and another wrong, that all actions are to him in this respect absolutely alike, and that the conception of virtue, as well as the rules of morality, are all the product of experience, teaching us what actions produce happiness, and what suffering. Such is the moral system, which is aptly enough termed the greatest happiness principle, and such the virtue which is correctly expressed as the art of maximising our enjoyment.

The style of the work from which I have made the above analysis is popular, witty, and somewhat amusing, but becomes at length tedious from

repetition and tautology. It abounds in biting sarcasm against what is termed the dogmatism and "*ipse-dixitism*" of most other moralists, but, what is remarkable, is itself at the same time one of the most striking instances of reiterated *assertion* that is to be found among all the ethical writings of the present century.

Now, in offering some remarks upon Bentham's philosophy, we must state distinctly, that we leave entirely out of the question his valuable labours in the department of jurisprudence, and refer simply to the principles of his moral theory. And here we would caution every ethical student against imagining, that he will find all the originality, which is claimed for the deontologist by his more ardent admirers. To speak of Bentham's having found out the true psychological law of our nature, as Newton discovered that of the material universe, we regard not only as metaphysically false, but even allowing its philosophical accuracy, to be *historically* untrue. To say nothing of the Epicureans of ancient times, and more recently of Hobbes, we might point out many writers, who have given far more than passing allusions to the very same doctrine as that, for which Bentham is so highly extolled, although they may not have expanded it so fully, or applied it so extensively, as was done in the case before us. The professed supporters of utility, again, such as Hume and Paley, proceeded virtually upon the very same

principle, and even if we pass over these, yet still we might refer to Gay's preface to Archbishop King "On the Origin of Evil," to the writings of Priestley, to the "Political Justice" of Godwin, and to many of the French moralists, for illustration of the very same theory, which Bentham only somewhat more perseveringly elaborated. The greatest happiness principle is, in fact, utilitarianism in one of its many different phases, and accordingly the objections, which we have already urged against that doctrine, apply with equal force to the one now before us. As the question, however, is of some importance, we shall specify a few other objections, which apply more directly to the utilitarian system, as held by the advocates of deontology, and

1. There is in these writers a perpetual habit of confounding the *cause* of virtuous action with the *effect*. We have it reiterated again and again as an unanswerable argument, that there must be a selfish pleasure experienced whenever we act on virtuous principles: for, if our action terminates in ourselves, it must arise from the prospect of our own happiness and advantage; if, on the other hand, we act for the welfare of others, still, we are told, it is only for the satisfaction of our own impulses that we seek to benefit them. Now, that there is pleasure attached to moral action, whether it be self-seeking or extra-seeking, we readily admit, but this is far from giving us a proof that such action *springs from any anticipation of the pleasure we*

*hope to obtain.*.. It is a pleasure to a strong man to exercise his limbs, but this is no evidence that he cannot have any other motive than this for exercising them. To a man devoted to business it is a pleasure to be perpetually absorbed in it, but still his activity may have many other grounds of excitement beside that one. Prove as you may, that pleasure actually accompanies, and even that we *expect* it to accompany the practice of every virtue, the point is still far from being settled, that there is no other spring of virtuous action in existence. The Deity, assuredly, may have given us a moral law, may have engraved it on our own minds, and placed it far beyond all the chances of human calculation; and yet may have attached pleasure to the obedience of it as a mark of his approval, and as a reward for our fidelity. The mere fact, therefore, that we always look for happiness to accompany virtuous action, does not at all prove that happiness is the ground of its moral excellence. This is confirmed when we consider

2. That, upon investigating the moral phenomena of our minds, we find a class of affections, which rise in their real worth just in proportion to their *disinterestedness*. If personal pleasure were the ground of virtue, then every affection ought to be esteemed higher in the scale of morality, in proportion as it tends more directly to *self* as its object. Just the contrary is the case. The more

our own individual interests are sacrificed in the pursuit of another's welfare, the higher rises the scale of virtue from which such conduct proceeds. If it be said that we sacrifice our own interests, because the pleasure of satisfying our benevolent feelings more than counterbalances the loss we sustain; we reply, that this only exhibits the vast strength of our purely disinterested affections, and affords no proof that, because they give us pleasure in their exercise, therefore they must be selfish in their origin. Only shew in one single instance, that the direct end of an action is for the sake of another to the sacrifice of ourselves, and the fact that we have a moral satisfaction in its performance, does not in the slightest degree shake its purely unselfish character.

3. We appeal to the evidence of our higher reason, as a testimony against this peculiar form of utilitarian morality. If virtue be a mere calculation of consequences, there can be no such thing as *moral philosophy*, strictly so called. The very idea of *philosophy*, or *science*, implies the existence of absolute or unalterable truth. Mathematical science investigates the unalterable relations of space and number; physical science, the unalterable laws of nature, as things are now constituted; metaphysical science, the unalterable forms of our intellectual being. What, we ask, can moral science investigate, unless it be the unalterable facts and principles of our moral constitution?

That there are certain *fixed* relations between man's moral sensibilities and his outward actions, we regard as a fact resting upon the evidence of our consciousness ; and it is to these relations that we direct our inquiries, when we seek to lay the groundwork of a moral philosophy. Very different, however, is our employment, when we are merely engaged in calculating for our future happiness, with pleasures and pains as our cyphers. What is a pleasure to one man is often a pain to another ; that which offers to me satisfaction, presents, perhaps, a prospect of nought but misery to you ; so that, moral relations on this principle must be as uncertain and variable as are the temperaments or idiosyncrasies of individual minds. There need to be on the deontological system a separate moral scale for every man ; nay, we ought all to revise our own moral principles every year or two, to see whether that which was a pleasure to us some time ago may not now have become an object of dissatisfaction : whether, therefore, that which was virtue has not now become vice. Our reason, we contend, in opposition to this, forces us to form certain primary and fundamental moral judgments, just as much as it necessitates the existence of our primary beliefs with regard to the external world, or to the fact of an exertion of power in the production of every effect, or to the axioms which lie at the foundation of all mathematical reasoning. It is just as impossible for me practically to deny



the obligation of justice, as it is to deny that the world exists, or that a whole is greater than a part. The one as well as the other rests upon the primary and undeniable facts of our own unchangeable consciousness,—facts which, though they may be disputed in theory, can never be denied in practice. That a philosophical dreamer may run his head against the wall on the score of his idealism, we do not dispute ; nor do we doubt, but that in the case of moral obliquity, where the consequences of the folly are not so immediate, men may be found to reject the fundamental axioms of moral obligation ; but in the healthy understandings of the mass of mankind, the one judgment is just as plainly developed as the other. Moral philosophy then, *as philosophy*, is annihilated, when once we admit the theory before us ; the whole question is taken out of the region of scientific truth, and reduced simply to the calculations of individual sagacity.

4. There is a secret *petitio principii* at the very foundation of all utilitarian reasoning, like that of Bentham. Every man, it is affirmed, *ought* to seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as the fundamental principle of his actions in the world. But, why *ought* he to do so ? On what ground can it be shewn, that I am bound to seek the welfare of myself or my fellow-creatures, if there is no such thing as moral obligation ? If it *pleases* me more to inflict misery upon mankind, why am I not just

as virtuous an agent in doing so, as if I please myself by producing their happiness? The greatest-happiness-principle itself must, in fact, rest upon the pedestal of moral obligation, otherwise there is no means of enforcing it as the true principle of action, either in our social or our political relations. Take away that firm resting place which is afforded by the notion of duty, and expressed in the word *ought*, and we may sink from one position down to another, without ever reaching a solid basis on which we may plant our feet, and lay the first stone of a moral superstructure. That this is really the case, is half acknowledged by the followers of Bentham, who are now visibly shrinking from the extreme view he has taken of utilitarianism, and seeking to *include* the idea of moral approbation, in order to give their doctrine some degree of strength and consistency.

5. Into the political consequences of this system we shall not allow ourselves to enter at any length: one thing, however, there is, of which we would remind those who hold up the excellence of Bentham's political writings, as a proof of the soundness of his ethical system; we mean, the fact that Hobbes, with a logic, equally, if not more severe, deduced from the very same fundamental principles the propriety of all government being grounded on absolute despotism, as the form best suited to the wants of human nature. That Bentham was so successful on the subject of jurisprudence, arose,

we consider, from his giving up the strict view of the selfish system with which he started, and following the dictates of common sense and of a benevolence, which were more consonant with his own disposition than they were with his moral theory.

Moreover, there is a fundamental distinction between the principles of legislation and those of private morality, which should never be lost sight of. The former principles *suppose* the existence of the latter, and must proceed in strict accordance with them, whether it appear a matter of policy to do so or not. The object of the jurist is, simply to take men with their moral feelings as they are, already fixed and determined, and so to direct their actions, as to bring about the greatest welfare of the community. Morality says, "Fiat justitia ruat cælum," jurisprudence points out *in what way* justice is to be done, so as to tend to the happiness of the whole nation. The one gives the absolute rule of action, the other only directs the details for social purposes. Moral law is immediately from God; political law, though springing from moral principles, is an adaptation of man;—the one is a code written upon the tablet of the human heart; the other, a code written in the statute book of the empire, conformable, indeed, to moral law, but compiled for social utility. To morality, as a science, the utilitarian ground is entirely destructive, altering its universal and necessary aspect;

in politics, utility, directed by moral precept, must be a chief element in every enactment. Bentham, looking at the subject with the eye of a jurist, by degrees became blind to everything but the utilitarian element—an error which, while only dangerous in legislation, is to the moralist fatal and deceptive from the very first step.

That Bentham was a great man, a courageous man, and in many respects a benevolent man, we believe all must be ready to admit; still, we cannot but think, that he neither read enough to disabuse his mind of many a cherished notion, which a wider range of investigation would have exploded, nor ever cultivated enough that steady reflective habit of mind, which evolves truth from the observation of our inward consciousness, and reduces, by a close analysis, the admitted facts of human nature to their primary origin. With unexampled patience he developed the influence of pleasure and pain upon human actions; but a deeper philosophy would have pointed out, that these are but the accompaniments of virtue, while the law and the imperative to its obedience come from a surer and a far more exalted source. That source once discovered, he must soon have felt how threadbare a view of man's moral constitution his favourite greatest-happiness-principle presents, how many of the noblest motives for virtue are entirely left out, and how much holier is the meaning attached to the word *duty*, than to merit the coarse and unphiloso-

phical ridicule which he thought fit to pour out upon it.

I cannot better sum up these remarks on Bentham's "Deontology" than by adopting the language of an intelligent reviewer, who remarks,—“ What we maintain with regard to deontology is, that with dogmatic exclusiveness it endeavours to supersede every other view of virtue but its own, and even the high principle of duty itself. That in the estimates it presents of happiness and of virtue it takes no notice, and virtually excludes some of the most influential causes of happiness, and the highest objects of moral excellence: that in itself it tends to fix the mind on the lowest principles of action, and presents nothing to raise in towards the highest: that it is inconsistent in its principles, representations, and conclusions, with established laws of human nature: that its statements are so little adjusted by moral wisdom, that they may often afford apparent justification for degrading vice: and that by bringing the highest rules of duty to the test of a standard, with which they have little relation, their comprehensiveness and their dignity is lessened, and their direction limited and perverted. Were the deontology generally made the exclusive guide of life, degradation and evil must be the result.” \*

We have thus viewed the principal methods by which the objective question of moral philosophy

\* Christian Reformer, 1835.

(what is the ground of virtue?) has been answered by the adherents of the sensational school. The error we now see in each case, is that which lies at the foundation of all sensationalism, namely, the tendency to look without, and derive all truth from experience, to the entire neglect both of our inner consciousness, and of those notions of absolute truth, which are as certain as they are indestructible.\*

II. We come now to the consideration of the *subjective sensational ethics* of the present century.

The problem which moral philosophy, *subjectively* considered, endeavours to solve, is the following :—What is the faculty by which we become cognisant of virtue and vice, and what other faculties contribute to the perfection of our moral nature? According as the primary moral sentiment of the human mind has been referred to a judgment, or to an inward feeling, the names of intellectual theorists, or of emotional theorists have been respectively awarded to the two corresponding classes of speculators. The idea of a *moral sense*, that is, of a peculiar and original emotion, by which we are led to the exercise of moral approbation or disapprobation, is altogether rejected by sensationalism; since, in that case, there would be at least one subjective tendency in the human mind, which does not come

\* For an estimate of the Benthamites, vide Sir James Mackintosh's Preliminary Dissertation to the Encyc. Britt.

from an empirical source. Equally incompatible, on the other hand, with sensational principles, is the theory of a *primitive moral judgment*, by which we discern right and wrong in actions, and form the distinct conceptions of good and evil. If, therefore, our moral sentiments arise neither from an implanted emotion or inward sense, nor from a primary judgment of our intellectual nature, the only possibility that remains is, that they are factitious, that they arise gradually by the aid of experience and the laws of association, and that they depend, therefore, like the rest of our empirical knowledge, upon the information of the external senses for their origin. Sensationalism, then, advocates the intellectual theory of morals, only in this subordinate sense; virtuous action being a calculation grounded on the experience of pleasures and pains, of injury or utility. The arguments against this utilitarian view of the case we have already summed up, and need not, therefore, at present recount.

But now, in approaching the subjective side of moral philosophy, there is a question of vast importance which meets us at the very outset, and that is the question of the liberty or necessity of the human will. According as this point is settled one way or the other, the whole succeeding inquiry will assume a very different aspect; in fact, the sensational theory of responsibility is almost entirely built upon the doctrine of necessity, as its foundation.

The point here to be considered, is not whether our actions are merely mechanical or otherwise; not whether or no we have the power to act according to the determination of our will; it is the prior question, whether the mind, in exercising volition, can determine itself, or whether it is necessarily determined by motives. That we are conscious of voluntary action, as flowing from a determination or choice, in contradistinction to the purely mechanical functions of the frame, it is scarcely necessary to assert; the only real question to be discussed is,—How come we to our determinations? What is it that puts the mind into the state of volition, from which certain acts or courses of action follow?

Now, just in proportion as the fundamental idea of *self*, as finite cause, holds a prominent place in our philosophy, will there be a greater share assigned to it in the process, by which our volitions and dispositions are formed; on the contrary, the greater be the tendency to absorb this idea in that of finite nature or of the infinite, so much the less will be the influence ascribed to our own personal power in the direction of our actions, and the moulding of our character. Pure subjective idealism makes self, or the will, within its own limits, omnipotent. Pure objective idealism, on the other hand, like that of Spinoza, by absorbing the individual self in the infinite substance, necessitates *absolute* fatalism: and, thirdly, pure sensationalism, which makes man



simply one form of organized matter, must, in like manner, end in a fatalism equally complete, because, on this hypothesis, we must be subject absolutely to material laws, and become exactly what the outward circumstances we are placed in render us. This last theory, therefore, we term circumstantial fatalism.

Modified systems of philosophy, again, will present different features of liberty or necessity, according as any one of these three elements, SELF, NATURE, or GOD, prevail over the other two; those which refer most to God and to nature, upholding a modified, or, as it is termed, a *philosophical* idea of necessity; and those which refer most to the native powers and energies of the mind, maintaining the ordinary doctrine of free-will. A philosophical necessity, grounded on the idea of God's foreknowledge, has been supported by theologians of the Calvinistic school, more or less rigidly, throughout the whole of the present century. *Their* conclusions, however, have arisen more from dogmatic than from scientific considerations. On the other hand, philosophical necessity, grounded upon the influence of external nature, and the circumstances which surround us, has given a tone, and, more recently, a very decided one, to all the ethical writings of the sensational school.

We may comprehend the foregoing remarks in the following summary. Let *self*, *nature*, *Deity*, be three powers, the two former of course created, and

allowed to exist by the last. If the power, self, is entirely uncontrolled, the result is pure subjective idealism. If it be entirely neutralized by Deity, the result is *religious* fatalism, if by nature it is *circumstantial* fatalism. Again, if self is only predominantly controlled, the result is philosophical necessity, whether the power opposed to it is that of Deity or of nature ; and, lastly, if it control itself, subject to the subordinate influences of the other two powers, the result is termed free-will. From these representations it will be evident, that sensationalism in philosophy tends to uphold the doctrine of necessity, which will, of course, advance nearer and nearer to circumstantial fatalism in proportion as the sensational principles become more sweeping.

In sketching the history of sensationalism during the last century, we shewed in what manner Hartley and Priestley drew the doctrine of philosophical necessity from their peculiar psychological principles. We may now add, that it is in a direct line from these acute authors, that all the subjective sensational ethics, which are now to be described, have regularly and connectedly flowed, so that we may regard all the necessarianism of the present age as the natural offspring of a sensational psychology. One of the most celebrated works in which the moral philosophy of this school was developed, is the well known inquiry of Godwin concerning "Political Justice."

Godwin might, indeed, have held in our sketch a place with Paley and Bentham, as the uncompromising advocate of utilitarianism; but his writings are equally celebrated for their defence of the doctrine of necessity, and the application of it both to private morality and political principles.

The publication of the "Political Justice" dates from the year 1793, and from that period down even to the present time, the moralists who have arisen from the school of Hartley, Priestley, and ultimately of Locke, have in almost every instance advocated necessarian principles, based upon an exaggerated statement of the influence of external circumstances. To enumerate the mere names of writers who, during the present century, have treated the various topics of moral philosophy upon this necessarian hypothesis (most of whom have drawn largely upon the works of Jonathan Edwards for their arguments,) would be both useless and tedious. The class, however, to which we allude are those, beginning chronologically with Belsham, who published his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," and of Morality, in the year 1801, and coming down to Bray, whose work on the "Philosophy of Necessity," appeared in the year 1841.

In glancing at the principles of the ethico-sensational school, which fills up the interval between these two writers, I shall not confine myself to the statements of any particular authors,

neither do I wish the reader to infer, that they all would admit the consequences which we may find to be included in their system. Most of them, indeed, so far from taking up the necessarian hypothesis, with a view of undermining the interests of true morality, have done so, as being, in their opinion, the only means of saving them. The advocates of free-will, it is known, on the contrary, have done the same; and as in such cases it is natural to suspect, that there is a portion of truth on both sides of the question, we must attempt to ascertain the fundamental ideas upon which these writers proceed, and to find out the real point of discrepancy between them. The moral system of the sensational necessarians assumes for the most part the following aspect, which, for the sake of clearness, we shall concentrate into a few detached sentences.

Man is born without any moral principles, notions, or tendencies whatever.\*

He has the capacity, however, of feeling pleasure or pain, which arise either from his direct sensations, or from the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of his propensities.

That which produces pleasure is good, that which produces pain is evil.

\* Those of the class now under consideration, who adopt phrenology, take, of course, a different view of this point; but in other respects they generally coincide with what we here lay down.

Pleasure, when not actually enjoyed, but only in contemplation, is what we term *desire*, as pain in contemplation is *fear*, or aversion.

Desire, again, is synonymous with *will* ; what we desire to possess is, all things considered, necessarily the object of our volition.

We cannot ourselves determine, what sensations shall give us pleasure, or the reverse ; consequently our will with regard to the seeking or production of them cannot be free.

With regard to our ideas, associations, and habits, it entirely depends upon our education, which shall be objects of desire, and which shall not.

Consequently, our desires, that is, our volitions, are absolutely and necessarily determined by *motives*, those motives arising either from our constitution or from our education.

As our actions follow our will, and the will follows the motives to which it is subjected, it is impossible that any man should act differently from what he really does under the same circumstances.

This is seen from the relation of cause and effect. Every volition must have a cause, and while the same causes exist the same effects must follow.

Moral causation is as sure and regular in its effects as physical.

On this alone is grounded the value and certainty

of moral means, and from this alone results the real moral worth of every action; since action, without motive, can have no moral quality about it. So far the necessarian.

Now, in opposition to these principles, the libertarian denies that volition and desire are one and the same thing, or that the doctrine of causation applies to the case of voluntary agents in the same sense as it does to everything else; and he appeals to various facts of our nature in order to bear out this view. First of all, he appeals to *consciousness*, which, if it does not subject us to perpetual deception, assures us every moment of our existence, that we are not *absolutely* under the power of motives, that we can follow one course or another as we may choose, that we might have chosen differently in the past, and that we may voluntarily mould our course for the future. Again, he appeals to the whole aspect of practical life, shewing that it is all based upon the notion of man's being a free agent; that it is not by necessity, for instance, that we build houses, construct engines, carry on business, or do any thing else of the same nature. And, finally, he appeals to man's moral sentiments, and argues, that although motives may be necessary to the goodness or badness of an action, yet if those motives are supreme, the moral quality is entirely taken away from the agent, who can only justly incur approbation or disapprobation when he

follows either a good or a bad motive with the most perfect freedom of volition. Such is the *popular* view of these famous antagonistic opinions.

Now, in estimating these two systems, let us see, first, what the necessarian means by his doctrine of moral causation; whether, in fact, he means anything at all contradictory to the common notion of free agency. If all our volitions have an *objective* cause, (that is to say, a cause not a part of, or dependent upon, ourselves,) which is certain and unalterable in its effects; then it is manifestly impossible to avoid the conclusion, that man is the subject of an irresistible fate. Every action, it is said, is the effect of a volition, but every volition is produced by a motive (or, in the language of necessity, a cause) over which we have no control; the inevitable conclusion is, that man is as much a machine under the effect of motives, as a steam engine is under the impulse of its moving power. This conclusion, too, be it observed, applies to man's whole practical life, because every possible action is the result of some volition. The reasoner, therefore, who argues, that every *moral* or *immoral* action which a man commits is *necessary*, because certain motives have acted irresistibly upon him from without, must accept the full conclusion, that everything else in human life takes place by a like constraint; that by a similar necessity an agent makes clothes, or mends shoes, or builds houses, lights fires, cooks provisions, and does

everything else, that depends upon our so-called voluntary activity. The fatalism here involved cannot be met by the plea, that the agent in question placed himself in the way of circumstances, which have led him to this or that particular mode of life; for if he did so, it was by means of a volition that he did it, and that volition was determined by a previous motive. Neither can it be met by the plea, that he was induced by some other agent to follow one course of action or another; for that agent, likewise, was the creature of fate. *His* will to prompt was determined by a like necessity; and the will previous to, and causative of that, was determined in the same manner; so that, beginning at any action of any voluntary agent, we may go back through a succession of causes, till we come to the great first cause, and thus evolve the idea that the whole of human actions are one chain of cause and effect absolutely fixed and determined from eternity.

Now, the philosophical necessarian, we know, shrinks from *practically* accepting that conclusion. He will not admit an absolute and fixed necessity, but only a moral or philosophical one. Besides, he speaks largely of education, and the importance of remedial means, and the benefit of cultivating the intellectual powers and the moral feelings: moreover, he exhorts his fellow men, on the very ground of his doctrine of moral causation, to get



the sources of proper culture for themselves, and to put them into the hands of the people at large, as the only method of making them virtuous and happy. Astounding folly must all that be, if human things are not contingent; if they move in a chain of cause and effect from the eternity past to the eternity to come; and if all our actions are absolutely determined by what is entirely beyond our control. Exhortation and effort must be quite out of place if the whole sum and substance of human life is a necessary chain of this nature, for whatever we may *appear* to do of our own accord is, on this system, but the mockery of a liberty, which we seem to possess, but which practises upon us a complete and perpetual illusion. This extreme, then, we repeat, the philosophical necessarian avoids: he shrinks back from the abyss of fatalism, however strongly his principles may draw him to its brink.

If, then, the doctrine of necessity, thus modified by the term philosophical, does *not* mean that all human life is machinery, that it is a series of fixed results which can never be altered, it must admit, in some form and to some extent or other, *that man is the master and regulator of his own mind, and has sufficient control over his dispositions and actions either to render himself improvable, or to make himself a subject of blame when the means of improvement are neglected.* Whether improvement originate in ourselves, or in the influence of another, still it

originates in *man*, and equally shews him to be in some sense a *source of moral action*.

Now let us look for a moment at the libertarian hypothesis, and see wherein it differs from the foregoing. First and foremost, we find a certain power of self-determining volition asserted ; that is, as its opponents correctly shew, the power of choosing without preference, or a choice without choice. The advocates of this self-determining power, with all their zeal, can never shew any decisive cases in which we choose without being induced by a motive ; they are always obliged, for illustration, to have recourse to some altogether insignificant actions (such as choosing one out of fifty shillings), which cannot, in the nature of things, have any moral quality attached to them ; while in all the important movements of our life, those by which our character is estimated, it is perfectly evident that we do and must act under the influence of certain motives. The libertarian, in fact, when pushed hard by his opponent, is always obliged to concede the point, that motives not only have an influence upon us, but do really *determine* our choice in all the great practical affairs of human life ; so that we must, after all, admit that man does not act ordinarily free from motives, but in strict accordance with them.

Now let us see in what consists the discrepancy between these two antagonist doctrines, when shorn of their respective anomalies. The necessarian, if

he mean anything by prefixing the word *philosophical* to his favourite dogma, admits that man is *in some sense* a free agent ; that he forms plans, that he modifies character, that he acts upon design which he can carry out or suspend ; in one word, that he is all that the libertarian would contend for, *except* that his volitions are ever determined by the strongest motives, instead of determining themselves. On the other hand, the libertarian, when pressed for his proof of the self-determining power, is at a loss to find any decisive actions, in which this power exercises itself in opposition to or irrespective of every kind of inducement. The only real point of dispute left, then, is this, how are we to reconcile that power of free and intelligent action, that capacity of design, that source of amelioration, or the reverse, which all admit to exist within ourselves, with the unquestionable fact, that we ever choose and must choose under the influence of the strongest inducement ? In other words, how is our *freedom* of choice consistent with the *necessity* of acting from a motive ?

The whole of the difficulty we now see is traced up to the word *motive*, and therefore it is in the analysis of this term that we must look for illumination. What, then, is a motive ? Strictly speaking, it is *that which immediately precedes our determination to act*. That which immediately leads to such a determination, however, must evidently be an *emotion*, for it is granted on all hands, that emotions

are the only active or impulsive principles of our nature. A motive, therefore, in the proper sense of the term, can be nothing else than the *mind itself in a certain state of feeling*; and in this view of the case there can be little difficulty in admitting, that every volition is determined by means of a motive, inasmuch as this is only another expression for the fact just stated, that the mind in a state of emotion is the immediate antecedent of all human action. Necessarians are perpetually arguing as though motives were *objective* realities, whereas nothing objective can possibly have the least power in exciting us to action, until it is combined with some kind of emotional feeling. Such emotional feeling alone it is, which acts as a moving power upon the will.

We see, therefore, at once, if this be true, in what manner man, though under the necessity of acting in accordance with motives, is yet perfectly free. He cannot, it is true, alter the relation which God has instituted between emotions and volitions *generally*, but there are a thousand ways by which he modifies his own states of feeling and through them, of course, his volitions also. The relation between motion and volition stands on the same footing as that which exists between our perception of premises and our inferring from them a logical conclusion. It is entirely beyond our power to refuse a logical conclusion, while we have a conviction of the truth of the premises, nor

can our belief be possibly modified, so long as the data remain to us unchanged; but we can easily reconsider those data, and then, according as we find them confirmed or shaken, we frequently strengthen or subvert our belief in the conclusion. Just so, in the other case, while the motive remains the volition must necessarily follow; but that motive, we must remember, is *a state of mind*, which we can control by a thousand different methods; and hence, if we can control the motive, through it we can control the volition as well. It is precisely the same fallacy in principle which leads one man to say, "That we can no more change our belief than we can the colour of our skin," and another man to say, "That our volitions are absolutely fixed by circumstances beyond our control." Of course, we can never alter the relation between the perception of premise and conclusion, nor between internal motive and volition; but we can, as we every day do, throw fresh light upon premises in the one case, and bring fresh inducements to bear upon our volitions in the other.

We might explain the fixed relation that exists between motive (in the sense just explained) and volition, by a reference to the mathematical idea attached to the word *function*. A sine, we say, is the function of an angle. There is a relation between them which can never be altered, and hence, so long as you have a particular angle in contemplation, the sine is necessarily determined.

If you require a sine of a different magnitude, the only possible way of obtaining it is by taking an angle of a different magnitude, the one varying with the other, because the relation between them is abiding. In like manner is it impossible to alter the relation between our motives and our volitions, the one following necessarily from the other; but notwithstanding this, we have a spontaneous power over our motives (*i. e.* our emotional states), by the exercise of which we can either reverse or modify our volitions almost to any extent we choose. *Volition is a function of the mind*, and by whatever means we can influence the mind as a whole, we have by those very means a power over the determinations of the will.

To this, I am aware, the necessarian might reply, that the very fact of our influencing our own mental states by the presentation of fresh motives and inducements to the mind, must itself depend upon a volition, which volition is determined by a previous motive, and so on, *ad infinitum*. But it must be remembered, that *motive* here means a *mental state*, and that our mental states do not solely depend upon external circumstances, over which we have no control, but also upon our own spontaneity. If this spontaneity be denied, and man be made wholly dependent upon externals, then we must appeal to psychology, for in the psychology we start with, the whole question is cradled.

The argument of the necessarian—that every volition must be determined by a previous volition, and so on to infinity, will only hold good on the psychological principle, that will and desire are the same thing; both equally expressing a passive state into which we are placed by the strongest inducement. The psychology, which maintains this theory, starts from sensation, and from it derives all the phenomena of the human mind. The mind itself in its view is passive, it is a bare receptacle of impressions and feelings, a sheet of blank paper; and every volition, therefore, must have its cause or circumstances out of ourselves. This psychology, however, we disown; we regard it as altogether untenable; disproved, and exploded, by the strictest analysis of the facts of our consciousness.

A close analysis of these facts enables us to detect three classes of phenomena in the human mind; those, namely, of intelligence, of feeling, of will—a classification to which all modern science is tending. Intelligence creates conceptions, laws, rules of action; sensibility supplies inducements and impulses; will creates effort, activity, the emission of voluntary power. Between the faculty as cause and the product as effect, there is no intermediate step. It is no more requisite to ask, *why* will produces effort and choice, than to ask why intelligence gives rise to ideas, or sensibility to impulses? The supposition that voluntary effort can spring from an inducement or external motive, is

the old error of sensationalism invading the theory of the will, that, namely, of substituting the occasion for the producing cause. The understanding and the feelings both present inducements to the will; and because the will follows some or other of them, it is supposed to be *necessarily* determined; but this is a false conclusion. These inducements are but the *occasions* of our volition, the power which produces them is that original spontaneity, that independent source of action which we term *the Will* or *the Me*, and which can re-act upon all the arguments of reason and all the impulses of emotion.

Whenever or wherever power is put forth, there must be not only an *occasion*, but also an effort or a spontaneous movement as its *cause*. Hence all power originates in *mind*, the only spontaneous principle, and that either the mind of God or the mind of man; and the very same argument which pretends to prove that man is not free, because he chooses from reasons or inducements, would also prove that God is not free, because he never acts without a plan. If we once give up the idea of spontaneity, as the spring of effort or choice, and account for that effort by the inducement alone, nothing can save us from the admission of an enormous and iron fatalism, to which God and man are alike subjected.

We allow, then, that volitions must necessarily follow from motives; that there is in fact a fixed



relation between them; but those motives are subjective states of mind, such as dispositions, affections, passions, &c., which our intellectual and active nature are adapted by their very constitution to develop, or to restrain. When, therefore, the necessarian enunciates the great truth, that no man could have acted differently from what he did under the given motives, all that he really expresses, if he be not a fatalist, is the common-place and most obvious fact, that emotions are the active principles of our nature, and that we always act in accordance with their impulse. If he denies that we have any control over these inward motives, then all his exhortations to the cultivation of the intellect and the feelings are nought but folly, and there is no refuge but in complete circumstantial fatalism.

*We affirm, then, that in principle there are only two possible hypotheses respecting liberty and necessity, the one is fatalism, the other is free will, in the sense in which we have employed it.*

There is one thing, which we freely grant to be fixed and necessary on every hypothesis, namely, the *relation* existing between our emotions and our volitions; and the philosophical necessarian, keeping his eye upon that point, has enstamped all volition as constrained, because it is always excited by a uniform and definite law of our nature: but as well might he call our *actions* constrained also, because they *necessarily* follow whenever the volition dictates and impels. When we see an action

(unless it be a purely mechanical one) we know that it arises from a volition; and in the same way, when we observe, or are conscious of a volition, we know that it arises from an emotion as its real proximate exciting cause; but behind both these lies the solid basis of human liberty, grounded upon that intelligence and native activity, which are the indestructible attributes of all moral and responsible creatures.

Self and nature, as we have already seen, are both of them powers, which act and react upon each other. Some men, unquestionably, are more under the influence of external things than others, while some, on the contrary, have what we term a *strong will*; that is, they possess a great capacity and habit of acting from fixed design rather than from short-sighted and more impulsive motives; but in either case, the real course pursued is the resultant of those two forces. Men who look most to the outward force, will form an exaggerated idea of its magnitude, and incline to the sensational form of philosophical necessity; while men who turn their thoughts most within, perceive the will operating so decisively upon external things, that at length they imagine it to be well nigh or entirely supreme. The sensationalist, accordingly, will ever tend to the doctrine of necessity, since the idea of nature occupies the largest share in his philosophy; the idealist will just as naturally tend to that of free will, since the notion of self, in this

case, becomes far the more predominant. A mere glance at the history of philosophy will shew that in nine cases out of ten the sensationalist and the necessarian, and the idealist and the libertarian, have respectively coincided with each other. We look upon both these classes of philosophers, however, so long as in their view of human nature they fall short of complete fatalism on the one hand, and subjective idealism on the other, as being generically advocates of the very same principles of voluntary action ; the only difference lies in the relative share of influence, which is assigned to self and not-self in the formation of our character and our dispositions.

The truth of the matter may be stated in a very few words. Mind is essentially an active principle ; but, without reason, its activity would be blind and aimless, following the impulses which flow in upon it from without. In proportion as reason becomes stronger, more vast, and more commanding, just in that proportion shall we find it regulating and directing our emotions. But our emotions are the real motives which excite volition, and volition impels to action ; so that it is in the possession of reason that we discover the great regulating principle, by which our natural activity is either restrained or directed, and by which we are enabled both to sketch out the designs of our life, and to pursue them in spite of all the obstacles which may stand in our path.

The error, then, in the necessarian school, which we have now been considering, is that of exaggerating the influence of circumstances and depressing the notion of *mind*, as an independent principle of action. In proportion as this is the case the idea of responsibility becomes weaker; crime is regarded rather as a disease; praise and blame as more nearly synonymous with felicitation and pity; and man becomes a link in one great chain of events, by which the purposes of Providence will at length be unfolded. Some of the authors of this school go much farther in adopting such conclusions than others; and more commonly than not, the shallowest thinkers carry out their principle to the furthest extent. If such writers as the author of "The Philosophy of Necessity," instead of assuming a tone of almost amusing defiance against far deeper thinkers than themselves, and holding up their favourite doctrine to view, as a remedy for all the ills of humanity, would only analyze more closely the subjects on which they write, and in place of making new discoveries in moral science, attempt to comprehend the old; we should hear no more about the doctrine of necessity as a *practical* principle in morality, than we hear of it in connexion with the motives, which induce men to plough their fields, to pave their streets, or to carry on their merchandise.

The whole of the utility of such ethical treatises, if there be any in them, is derived from their

setting forth one very plain precept, "Mould your circumstances, or else they will mould you:" the bane of them is, that men easily abuse the results, and under the plea of necessity, break loose from all idea of moral obligation.

Before we close our sketch of this controversy, we must just allude to the extreme form in which the necessarian principle has appeared under the title of "Socialism." This is the fullest development of philosophical necessity which the present age has known, and cannot, therefore, be altogether passed over; although the very dogmatical and unscientific character, in which it has been enunciated by its apostle, almost deprives it of any title to the name of philosophy. In making a few observations on this system, we shall not enter into a deduction of its consequences, or the thousand and one anomalies which it contains; these have been shewn in several different forms, some argumentative and some declamatory, by many controversial writers. Our business is simply with the *philosophy* on which the system is grounded, in estimating which we shall not depart from the spirit of impartiality, that we have hitherto followed. Let us look, then, at the fundamental facts upon which the whole superstructure rests.

We are told, first, "That man is a compound being, whose character is formed of his constitution or organization at birth, and of the effects of external circumstances upon it from birth to

death; such original organization and external influences continually acting and reacting each upon the other." Now, if this fact means merely to assert, that the whole of the influences which form a man's character consist of the powers and faculties which he has naturally, and the circumstances which lead to their development; that is, in other words, of his subjective self, and of objective reality acting upon it; then it simply amounts to a truism of about the same description, as that a whole is equal to its parts. What in the nature of things can there be in the case, beyond the subjective and the objective, and their mutual relation to each other? To make this theory of any use, the necessarian must shew that spontaneity is no part of our original constitution. Or, if it mean to assert, *secondly*, that man consists merely of a *bodily* organization at birth, which is moulded by the influence of external things afterwards, then it coolly begs the whole question of materialism, sets down the Hartleian psychology as undeniable, and reasons from them both as if axiomatically true. Or, lastly, if it mean that, because man has a certain mental constitution given him, and is afterwards exposed to circumstances beyond his control, therefore he is entirely the subject of necessity, it takes for granted all along the very point it intends to prove, namely, that *in his primary constitution* there is no provision made for his free agency. This first law, therefore, we regard

as absolutely futile, for either it says nothing at all, or it takes everything that is intended to flow from it for granted; and in either case it is so equivocal in its meaning, as to be totally unfit for an axiom, that is supposed to be something incapable of misapprehension.

The second of these fundamental facts is as follows:—"That man is compelled by his original constitution to receive his feelings and his convictions independently of his will." Now, here the same error is committed in its full extent, to which I have before alluded,—I mean, the error of supposing, that, because our belief follows from certain data, and our volitions flow from certain emotions, in either case *by a uniform law of our nature*, therefore both belief and volition are entirely beyond our control. Of course, if I have two legitimate premises of a syllogism given, I am necessitated to draw the conclusion they contain; but this is far from proving, that I have no power to subvert my belief in that conclusion by other means. To call the perception of sequence in an argument, as Mr. Owen does, an instinct is nought but a total perversion of language; and as to its bearing upon the doctrine of necessity, properly so called, it illustrates nothing whatever beyond the regularity of this law of our mental constitution. Just on the same principle, is it equally fallacious to infer, that our volitions are constrained, because they come and go through the operation of certain

laws relating to our active powers. The mental affections from which our volitions arise, we must remember, are placed under the control of our reason and will, and to call them instincts, as though they operated *blindly*, in the same manner as do the impulses of animals, is an entire misapprehension of the whole philosophy of our active powers.

Try for an instant how phraseology of this nature (substituting the word instinct for conviction, belief, and disposition) would sound in ordinary life. I have an *instinct* that such a road leads to the village A, but I go and explore the country, and finding myself wrong; I have now another instinct, that I must go thither by a different road. My instincts, it is pleaded, are absolutely necessary, and therefore, under the former one, I could not but take the wrong road, however much it might have cost me or injured another to do so. What reply would such an excuse justly call forth? Fool that you were, why didn't you inquire the way? For what purpose was intelligence and activity given you, but to direct your course, whether it be in small matters or large? In like manner, what would be thought of a man who pleaded his *instinct*, when he robbed or cheated or beat his fellow-creature? Call such propensities diseases, if you will, they are diseases such as every sane man has the means of guarding against, from the fact of his possessing intellectual



powers, moral perceptions, and voluntary power ; diseases, therefore, for which he is personally responsible, in proportion to his light, both to God and to man.

Against the appeal which Mr. Owen makes to our consciousness, whether evil emotions do not rise within us, not subject to the control of the will, we make the contrary appeal, whether our susceptibility of these emotions is not to be repressed, by the guidance of our reason and by the voice of our conscience. The education of our moral susceptibilities is analogous to the formation of a mechanical power of body ; as the facility, for example, of performance on a musical instrument. Such facility is not the effort of *one* volition, but the gradual effect of a number often repeated under the direction of our reason. So likewise the moulding of our affections, emotions, and desires, though it is not the result of a single exertion of the will, is effectually accomplished by a series of volitions, all adapted to that end by an active and overruling intelligence. I take up a new instrument and find I cannot, by any direct volition, perform upon it ; but do I therefore conclude that performance is not attainable by volition at all ? So, also, I resist a desire or propensity, and find that my volition is not strong enough at once to give me the power over it, which I require ; but the conclusion which some draw that such propensities cannot be

influenced by volition at all, is equally unsound, as would be that to which I have just alluded. The fallacy of arguing that because certain affections cannot be commanded by a single volition, therefore they cannot, by any number whatever, is that known in logic under the name of "fallacia compositionis," and in this case is very easily solved by an appeal to the facts of every day life.

There is yet another absurdity couched under the loose language of this second "fact," and that is the declaration, that man, by his original constitution, is compelled to receive his feelings and convictions independently of his will, whereas, in fact, the will is a part of that original constitution which compels him, and has its share with the rest of the faculties in the whole process by which the mind is enlightened and the feelings expanded. This second fact, indeed, when analysed has just about the same nonentity of meaning in it as the other, while the proof of it is based upon an unpardonable abuse of the ordinary language, by which we are accustomed to express our ideas upon metaphysical subjects.

The third fact is no better, namely, "That our feelings or convictions, or both of them united, create the motive to action called the will, which stimulates him to act, and decides his actions."

To speak of feelings or convictions *creating* the will is simply an absurdity. The will is another name for that real but mysterious power of mind,

which, in a moment, can, at its bidding, emit an energy, that leads us to voluntary action or endurance. Feeling and convictions could never *create* this power, although it is quite true that they may regulate the movements of it. This being premised, the fallacious conclusion intended to be drawn from such a representation, becomes manifest. The argument implied in it is this. Our feelings and convictions *create* the will, therefore the will which is a creation of their own cannot possibly have had any previous influence upon them. But how does the case really stand? The will is a mighty energy of a nature quite its own, which restrains or impels the whole man at its behest; created, moreover, not by feelings and convictions, but by the Author itself of the human mind. Our feelings and convictions act upon this power, and set it in motion; but then it at once reacts upon them, and, guided by intelligence, moulds them to a vast extent at its pleasure. Take a separate volition, and it is quite true that this is determined by some feeling or emotion of the mind; but we must be cautious not to confound an individual volition with *the will*, viewed as the abiding fact or principle of our spontaneity. A single volition is to the will, as a whole, what a single wave is to the ocean. Because the wind creates every wave which heaves upon the surface, is it therefore true that it created the ocean itself? And so, because a feeling or a conviction may occa-

sion a separate volition, is it, therefore, true that it originates the voluntary power of which this volition is but a movement? It is in the confounding of these, I imagine, that the source of the error we are exposing is to be found, an error which, in fact, vitiates the whole conclusion. It is not true, then, that our feelings, or convictions, or both united, create the will, neither, if the word create be twisted so as to signify only so much as the word determine, does it follow, that because a single volition is determined by our feelings, therefore the will taken as a whole has no power to react upon them.

The fourth fundamental fact\* is a remark perfectly true, but in any other system beside the one before us, would be regarded as perfectly useless, because it is always taken for granted. The fifth fact† is also based upon a true idea, but is stated in such a manner as to exaggerate greatly the influence of circumstances upon the human organ-

\* The fact runs as follows :—

That the organization of no two human beings is ever precisely similar at birth, nor can art subsequently form any two individuals from infancy to maturity to be precisely similar.

† The fifth fact is this :—

That, nevertheless, the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed into a very inferior or a very superior being, according to the qualities of the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth.

ization. In fine, taken as a whole, it would be difficult to find any system of philosophy in an enlightened age, built upon a foundation so indefinite, so equivocal, and so utterly incapable of sustaining a superstructure of any weight, or of any durability.

The sentence in which the whole point of the system is acknowledged to be concentrated, is "that the character of an individual is formed *for* him, and not *by* him." But in no sense whatever can this sentiment be true, except we regard it as expressing the obvious fact, that none of our faculties are self-created, and that, consequently, whatever mental energy we have, comes originally from an extraneous source ; that is, from the hands of the Creator himself. The mental constitution of a man is *himself*, as distinguished from every one else ; so that, to affirm that our characters necessarily arise from our original constitution, as acted on by external circumstances, and then to add that every one's character is formed independently of himself, is a palpable contradiction in terms. No doubt our minds themselves were formed *for* us by the infinite power from which they emanated ; but ever since their formation, they have had a great share in the development of our moral dispositions, a fact which Mr. Owen unwittingly and unintentionally grants, when he speaks of the original constitution moulding the character.

The point, no doubt, which the doctrine of the new

moral world intends to aim at is, that man is born a *passive creature* with certain susceptibilities ; that external circumstances acting on these susceptibilities, of necessity give rise to our dispositions, and through them form our whole character. The view thus taken of human nature is, doubtless, such as might naturally enough be formed by a mind, that has slender reflective powers, a weak sense of the sacredness of moral distinctions, and little reverence for religion ; and which, in addition to this, has been accustomed to live amid the pressure of active business, and to deal with that class of mankind, which exists rather as the appendages and the machinery of commercial life, than with those who are inured to habits of deep meditation or of moral refinement. The primitive judgments, the fundamental ideas, the original moral perceptions, and the sense of responsibility, which are among the very clearest phenomena to the reflective mind, are here all lost sight of, while man is reduced simply to an animal of somewhat higher instincts than the rest of the animated creation around him. This, we say, is the *meaning* of the system, but the attempt at stating these principles scientifically, and the aim at philosophising without any sound capacity for philosophy, have given rise to so much that is indistinct and paradoxical in language, that, were not the consequences inferred of a serious nature, the whole matter must be regarded as a nonentity, which were not worth the "pomp and

ceremony of an argument." So long as Mr. Owen, in common with the rest of the sensationalists, performs the real mission of this school of philosophy, by pointing out the importance of attending to the influence, which outward things exert upon the mind and character, he is to be admired and applauded; but when he drives his principles to an extreme, shaking the pillars of morals and religion, and involving all human things in one unalterable chain of fixed necessity, he presents another instance to be added to the many which have gone before, of the absurdities into which those men invariably fall, who devote their whole life to the expansion of one idea to the neglect of everything else.

In concluding these remarks upon the necessarian controversy, we shall take the opportunity which is here offered of making one or two observations towards elucidating the real ground of human liberty. The great stumbling-block against the admission of this fundamental truth, is the principle of causality. "Every phenomenon must have a cause; volition is a phenomenon, and therefore must be caused;" such is the position in which necessarianism intrenches itself. Now, for this argument to be good, it must be shewn, that the principle of causality applies to voluntary agents *in the same sense* as it does to the material world, and that a phenomenon in the one case is under the same conditions as a phenomenon in the other.

It is here that the prime mistake originates. The very foundation of the difference between a being possessing a personality, and everything else around him is, that he holds an entirely different relation to the chain of causes and effects by which the phenomena of the material world are linked together. By a phenomenon in this latter sense, we mean something which *begins* to exist, and then *terminates*. Suppose I make one ball strike another: the cause of motion in the second ball is the movement of the first; the cause of movement in the first is the impulse given to it by my arm; the cause of that impulse is the action of the nerves which convey energy from the brain; and the cause of this nervous action is *a volition*. Here the movements of the first and second ball, of the arm and the nerves, as well as the volition itself, are all phenomena, which begin to exist, and therefore must have in each case a *particular cause* adequate to the production of the effect, which effect accordingly must *necessarily* follow when the cause is at hand.

But now we have to ask, (for this is the main point,) *what is the cause or ground of the volition?* By what power is it called into being? It is not produced by an argument, or an inducement, or an objective motive of any kind: these might have given *occasion* to the volition, but none of them could really impart the mysterious power itself, by which mind sets the machinery of the body in



motion for the accomplishment of its purposes. The ground of the volition is only to be seen in the fact of my personality, in other words, in the fact, that I am the subject of a spontaneity of action entirely distinct from any quality resident in the material world. Admit that some inducement gave occasion to the volition ; yet still the very fact of choosing that inducement out of the rest, implies an effort of will. Now this fact of personality, and, consequently, this phenomenon of liberty, is one of whose *beginning* we know nothing ; whose *cause*, independently of the great first cause of all things, we are totally unable to trace. It is an ever abiding reality, to which the term phenomenon is applied in quite a different sense from what it is to all other objects around us ; one, therefore, to which the principle of causality, in its proper sense, does not at all apply. If our spontaneity were to come and go, presenting a *succession* of phenomena, then we should look for a cause, by which each of the parts of this succession were severally produced, but as it is one abiding fact of mind, which never varies, we can no more inquire for the *particular* cause of its spontaneous action beyond the will of the Creator, than we can for the cause of the great abiding fact of the universe itself. That very attribute of deity, which renders God himself a spontaneous source of action, was communicated by the Deity to man, when he made him intelligent, responsible, and free.

Instead, then, of arguing the doctrine of liberty upon the arena of our separate volitions, which, as they come and go, are subject to the law of causality, we must remove the question one step further back to the idea of personality. Volitions are *not* free, but man is; they are in each case determined, but man determines them; they each arise and go as their cause impels, but that cause itself, which is grounded on the very notion of personality, ever remains the same.

To test the justice of these conclusions we have only to appeal to the facts of our consciousness. Do we mean the same thing when we speak of a cause and when we speak of a motive? Do we attach the same certainty and uniformity of sequence to the one as we do to the other? And if we feel on certain occasions a motive to be for the moment irresistible, are we not conscious of a higher power within, lying behind the impulse that urges us, by which the motive may be arrested and the spell of its influence finally broken? This power is no other than that of spontaneity, the attribute and distinctive feature of every being, that possesses reason and personality.

Consider again the phenomena of intelligence, of design, of attention. Whence is it that we can form purposes; whence that we can judge between plans for execution; whence that we can make at any predetermined time a beginning; whence that we can stop in our course, and anon proceed;

whence that we mould all the circumstances in which we may be placed so as to tend to the accomplishment of our scheme? These voluntary actions, it is true, may spring from motives; but motives, we again repeat, are states of mind, in the production of which self, as an active principle, has as much, and often *more*, to do than any objective realities. All these facts point to a uniform and abiding cause, which does not take its stand among the passing phenomena of human things, but which is free and active in its very nature; open, indeed, to the influence of inducements, but not governed by them; cognisant of the power of motives, but having no cause and no beginning, except in God. To the argument, then, before stated, "Every volition must have a cause, and therefore is *not* free;" we may reply, "Every volition has a voluntary cause, and therefore the man is free."

The question as to the possibility of free agency in the creature co-existing with omniscience in the Creator, we do not attempt to moot. The problem is really the same as the possibility of God's creating a responsible and intelligent being at all, a possibility, which we can only resolve into the fact of the divine omnipotence. God willed to make man free, and accordingly he is free; he willed to create him in his own image, and did not therefore pass by the most distinctive feature which that image presents.

The long discussion into which the doctrine of

necessity has led us, has almost caused us to lose sight of the original problem with which we started, namely, to determine by what faculty it is, that we become cognisant of moral distinctions. The analysis, however, which we have given of human liberty has gone far to settle this point also. Take any action of a voluntary agent, and ask,—why is it a moral action? First of all, we must see that it is not a mere forced and instinctive movement, but that it really flows from volition. But, next, from what does the volition flow? Clearly, as we have seen, from a mental *emotion*; so that we must now look to this, as including in it the moral element. But, lastly, whence arises the emotion? Psychology shews us, that every emotion springs from some conception of our reason. In reason, therefore, we have the primitive and essential distinction of right and wrong, arising upon the contemplation of human actions; in emotion, we have the feeling of moral approbation and disapprobation excited by this conception; and then in the will we find the effort, which carries out the last impulse of the emotions into practical operation. If one of these three elements be wanting, the moral nature must be incomplete. First, we must have the conception of right and wrong, or moral intelligence would be wanting; next, we must have the feeling or impulse arising from it, or moral disposition would be wanting; and, lastly, we must have freedom to act upon right or wrong motives, or else responsibility

would be wanting. According to this, conscience or the moral nature must consist in the combination of reason, sensibility, and will, all acting together upon the fundamental conceptions of good and evil; while the perversion of conscience must consist in dimming our moral ideas, in blunting our moral susceptibilities, and in weakening the power of the will over the whole man. How vastly this differs from the sensational view of our moral nature, which makes it consist in calculating for pleasure, it is needless to explain.

(C.) SENSATIONAL PHYSIOLOGISTS.

The application of physiological investigations to mental science is, comparatively speaking, of recent date. A few crude speculations may be found amongst writers of an earlier period, respecting animal spirits and other "fictitious entities" of a similar nature; but all of them about equally visionary and ungrounded. Hartley in our own country and Bonnet on the Continent, appear to have been the first, who employed a sound and experimental knowledge of the human frame to discover the physical conditions of sensation or intelligence; although in neither case did very marked success result from their efforts. But within the last twenty years the science of physiology, both as applied to man and to the inferior animals, has expanded to so vast an extent, and the multitude of the results it has unfolded is

so great, that its bearing upon intellectual philosophy has now become evident. To offer any correct analysis of these results is not within the limits of our capacity, nor were this the case would it comport with the plan we have set before us, of never leaving the track of speculative philosophy. Speculative philosophy, however, has been so far influenced and benefited by these investigations, that it seems imperative upon us to point out specifically, before we proceed further, what the most prominent of the advantages referred to really are. The main points, then, in which physiology has aided the investigations of the metaphysician, may be found, perhaps, included in the following particulars.

1. It has either done away with, or prevented the existence of many false theories, which are generally found very obstructive to the real progress of truth. The phantasms of Aristotle, the animal spirits of Descartes, the vibrations of Hartley, and all such speculations, are virtually moved out of the road by a closer examination of the *facts* of the case, and thus prevented from encumbering the movements of scientific research. In opposition to such notions it has been discovered, that the different kinds of nerves have specific qualities of their own, and that instead of merely *conveying* impressions, they give rise to certain phenomena simply by the excitement of their own properties.

2. Physiology has marked out three great divisions of the nervous system, shewing the real distinction which exists between the sympathetic, the sensitive, and the motor nerves, and the actual difference there must accordingly be, between the proximate principle of organic life, of sensitive existence, and of voluntary action.\* Whatever, therefore, the ultimate principle may be in which all these phenomena are supposed to unite, yet physiology assuredly puts us on a right track when it indicates, by means of such discoveries, the propriety of investigating the distinctive features, which these three classes of phenomena present.

3. Physiology throws, in this way, considerable light upon the emotions, shewing which are purely pathological or instinctive, and which arise from the intellect. The nerves of the instinctive emotions have been clearly pointed out, and their centre localised in the ganglionic masses which lie at the base of the brain ; thus shewing, that as their organ is distinct from the cerebrum, there is every reason to conclude that these emotions also are distinct from and independent of the intellectual functions, which are traced to the cerebral hemispheres. A comparison, moreover, of the brain of animals, which for the most part have great instinctive powers and little intelligence, throws considerable light upon this portion of our constitution.

\* *Vide*, a small tract on the Connexion between Physiology and Intellectual Philosophy. By John Barlow.

4. The physiology of the brain presents many facts respecting the physical conditions of thought, which illustrate various points in the philosophy of the human mind. As a proof of this, we may refer to the investigations of phrenology. Without giving any prejudication respecting the truth or falsity of phrenology as a whole, yet it can hardly be denied, that its attempts at cerebral physiology have brought to light many facts respecting the action of different divisions of the brain in connexion with temperaments, dispositions, insanity, and mental manifestation generally, to which intellectual science is much indebted.

5. A still further advantage derived from physiology is the power it affords us of comparing the structure of the brain in different animals with their various habits, and of placing both by the side of the cerebral development and the mental manifestations observable in man. Although it will assuredly never be possible to give a whole analysis of the intellectual and emotional phenomena of the human mind, grounded upon the structure of the brain and the nervous system, yet there can be no doubt, but that many of the *peculiarities*, which are attached to those phenomena, can be accounted for and explained by an accurate knowledge of physical processes, and that much error is counteracted when, instead of raising other theories to account for idiosyncrasies, we can refer them to their proper material causes.



In preventing then numerous errors, in giving the data for certain general divisions of phenomena, and in accounting for many otherwise perplexing facts in the pathology of the human mind, we conceive physiology has been of considerable use to the metaphysician, and may yet unfold additional materials to aid his investigations. At the same time, it is of great importance that the two sciences should each hold their proper limits, and that the one should not be allowed to assume the ground which peculiarly belongs to the other. To mark the boundaries of physiology and psychology we must simply inquire,—what are the phenomena which we learn by *consciousness*, and what those which we learn by outward *observation*? These two regions lie entirely without each other; so much so, that there is not a single fact known by consciousness which we could ever have learned by observation, and not a single fact known by observation of which we are ever conscious. A sensation, for example, is known simply by consciousness; the material conditions of it, as seen in the organ and the nervous system, simply by observation. No one could ever *see* a sensation, or be *conscious* of the organic action; accordingly, the one fact belongs to psychology, the other to physiology. The acutest search of the physiologist entirely fails to discover anything at all analogous to a thought or an emotion, which are simply facts of consciousness; on the other hand, the functions of

life, or the material affections of the brain, are phenomena of actual observation of which we are never conscious. These two orders of facts draw a broad line of distinction between the two sciences in question; and it is only in those particular instances, where certain phenomena of observation are found uniformly to co-exist with certain phenomena of consciousness, that they can have any direct or serviceable bearing upon each other.

Accordingly, the most eminent physiologists of our country, more especially those, who manifest any considerable powers of philosophical thinking, as well as of outward observation, have admitted fully the importance of analysing the facts of consciousness *reflectively*; while they have been content with confining their own peculiar science to its natural limits. The researches of Dr. Prichard, for example, upon the vital principle clearly tend to shew, that mind exists as a distinct entity; that its connexion with the nervous system is confined to a few simple operations; and that beyond these we must study mental science, if at all, solely by the aid of our inward consciousness. Professor Alison, again, who perhaps more than any other writer has combined the metaphysician with the physiologist, is evidently an adherent of the more modern school of Scotch philosophy, and would probably go throughout, hand in hand with Brown, as a mental analyst. To these I may add the name of Dr. W. B. Carpenter, whose works manifest some of

the best qualities both of the thinker and the observer. Beside the opinions which may be discovered in his volume on "Human Physiology," it may be permitted me to add the following views on this question, which have been derived from a personal inquiry: namely, that peculiar and original mental qualities really exist; that these are quite distinct from any properties of a physiological character; that, when acted upon by their appropriate stimuli, they give rise to our various mental and moral manifestations; and that psychology is a science which must progress by an accurate induction of the phenomena of *mind*, as we see it around us in its different stages of development. All this tends to elucidate the fact, that while physiology may cast a light in some particular points upon intellectual philosophy, yet the courses of the two run clear of each other, and that each must be investigated on its own grounds.

Whilst, however, some of the first physiological writers have thus wisely avoided the shoals of sensationalism, yet it cannot be denied, that the exclusive pursuit of physiology has a great tendency to withdraw the mind from following a reflective philosophy, and to lead it to indulge in what is merely experimental. Amongst those, who have manifested this tendency, and attempted to investigate the facts of consciousness by the aid of outward observation rather than by inward reflection, we may distinguish two classes, viz., those who

admit the independent existence of mind and those who do not; those whom we may, accordingly, designate as non-materialists and those belonging to the school of materialism. Our future remarks, then, upon the school of philosophers, whom we have included under the general term of *sensational physiologists* will fall under these two heads.

We begin with the NON-MATERIALISTS. This term, it is right to premise, we employ in preference to the term *immaterialists*, because it not only includes those who actually oppose materialism, but likewise all those who, like the phrenologists, decline giving any answer to the question respecting the essence of mind; regarding it as a useless problem, for the solution of which we have not sufficient data.

Now, first, under this general and somewhat indefinite appellation of non-materialist, we may include a valuable class of authors, chiefly of the medical profession, who, without cultivating any remarkable powers of mental analysis, yet subject the *habits* and *instincts* of man, the various points of his mental constitution which depend upon outward observation, and the relative influences of body and mind to a close and often a very instructive investigation. They look upon human nature sometimes with the eye of the physiologist, sometimes of the natural historian; and, while from the habit of outward observation the general tone of their philosophy flows most readily in the

sensational channel, yet the results of their thoughts upon man in his various relations, are not only in themselves interesting, but often furnish materials, which more acute metaphysical analysts might employ to no small advantage in supporting a spiritual system. Amongst the works which have emanated from these sources, we shall content ourselves with simply mentioning the following, all of which have appeared comparatively within recent times:—Meryon's "Physical and Intellectual Constitution of Man;" Renon's "Delineations Physical, Intellectual, and Moral;" two interesting works written respectively by Drs. Yarnold and Bushman, "On the Philosophy of Reason and Instinct;" Newnham, "On the Reciprocal Influence of Body and Mind."

Almost the only professed physiologist of eminence, whom we could place here, is Sir C. Bell. That he is neither phrenologist nor materialist is sufficiently evident; and yet, when he affirms that "all our ideas originate in the brain, and are produced by the impression made on the extremities of the nerves," his philosophy appears of a strictly sensational character. To enter, however, into the miscellaneous philosophical opinions, which are to be found scattered throughout the pages of the above-mentioned works, and others of a similar nature, is not our present intention. Did they form together a distinct school of philosophy, they would claim a larger space in its history; but

having just assigned them the position they may be regarded as holding in the speculative philosophy of our country, we must recommend our readers, who would enter into the minor shades of their opinions, to procure the works themselves, promising them no little pleasure and profit in the perusal.

Leaving, then, the writers of these miscellaneous disquisitions, we come now to consider by far the most prominent of all the modern systems of intellectual science, which bear upon them a physiological character ; I mean that which is known under the name of *phrenology*. This system we rank under the head of non-materialism, inasmuch as its chief and most talented advocates in this country have either expressly maintained the spirituality of mind, regarding the brain merely as the organ of its manifestation, or else have altogether interdicted the question of spiritualism and materialism as lying beyond the powers of human research. Some, it is true, affirm that phrenology *necessarily* involves the truth of materialism ; but, without giving a judgment upon that point, we only remark, that our present business is with the actual facts of our national philosophical history, and that we must, therefore, regard such writers as those of the phrenological journal, not according to what it is affirmed they ought to be, but according to what they actually are.

In estimating the truth and value of the phrenological system as a whole, there are two distinct questions which come before us. First, whether the physiological facts upon which it is all based are correct? And secondly, whether, if they be correct, they are of any use in giving us a basis, upon which the superstructure of an intellectual philosophy can be erected?

Under the first inquiry, we seek to determine such points as these—whether the brain is in any true sense the organ of the mind's development; whether separate portions of it subserve the manifestation of particular feelings or faculties; whether the assignment of those portions are correctly made in the phrenological map of the human skull; whether the power of mental exertion is in exact proportion to the size of the organ; and lastly, whether we can judge correctly of the inward cerebral formation from the cranium as viewed by us externally. The fundamental evidence for settling points of this nature must be sought in a thorough acquaintance with the physiology of the brain, and nervous system; and, consequently, the first physiologists of the age are the direct source, to which our primary appeal should be made. The result of this appeal is, that some eminent physiologists appear to be the advocates of phrenology, while many others of the highest class, so far from giving in their adherence to it,

have stated some very strong objections which, as far as we know, have never been *fully* answered.\*

\* The following extract is from Dr. Carpenter's "Human Physiology," in which the real difficulties of the case are very clearly stated :—"A fundamental doubt hangs over every determination of function, which results from a comparison of the size of the supposed organ or region in different cases. If it be true, that the grey matter only is the source of power, and that the white is merely a conductor, we have no right to assume that the total size of the organ affords a measure of its power, until it has been shewn that the thickness of the cortical substance can be judged by the size of the brain, or of any part of it. Certainly there is a considerable variation in this respect among different individuals, and it is yet to be proved that the relation is constant in different parts of the same individual brain. Until this is substantiated, all inferences drawn from correspondence between the prominence of a certain part of the brain, and the intensity of a particular function, are invalid ; that is, if the general doctrine of the relative functions of grey and white matter be true. Further, there is, unfortunately, a considerable uncertainty attending all phrenological observations, which are made upon the cranium rather than upon the brain ; this we have seen from the discrepancy between the statements of Gall, and the facts ascertained respecting the comparative weight of the cerebellum in castrated and entire horses. It appears to the author, too, that comparative anatomy and psychology are very far from supporting the system, when their evidence is fairly weighed. It is a very curious circumstance, that the difference in the antero-posterior diameter, between the brain of man and that of the lower mammalia, principally arises from the shortness of the posterior lobes in the latter, these being seldom long enough to cover the cerebellum. Yet it is in these posterior lobes that the animal propensities are regarded by phrenologists as having their seat.



To determine the truth or falsehood of these objections, lies entirely in the hands of future

On the other hand, the anterior lobes in which the intellectual faculties are considered as residing, bear in many animals a much larger proportion to the whole bulk of the brain, than they do in man. Again, comparative anatomy and experiment alike sanction the conclusion, that the purely instinctive propensities have not their seat in the cerebrum. These examples, and many similar ones, that might easily be added, collectively shew the uncertainty, to say the least, of the inferences that are by many regarded as firmly established.

“The evidence of pathology, again, tends to shew that particular disorders of function may result from lesions of any part of the cerebral hemispheres ; this has been especially noticed, for example, in regard to the loss of the memory of words, which phrenologists locate in the organ of language ; there, of course, the lesion might be expected on their system to present itself ; but this is by no means constantly or even generally the case. Phrenologists lay great stress on the effects of local injury in causing loss of memory of a particular subject ; but this principle, if carried out to its full extent, would require us to regard each organ as split up into a large number of subdivisions ; the organ of language, for example, having one storehouse for Latin, another for Greek, &c., either of which may be destroyed without the other being affected. A very important source of evidence is that afforded by the correspondence between the several kinds of monomania, and the forms of the brains of the persons exhibiting them ; and the number of those who, having studied this question, have given in their adhesion to the phrenological system, is one of the most weighty evidences of its containing much truth. The doubts which have been expressed on the subject would have much less weight if the coincidence of phrenological determinations of character with truth were more constant.

physiological investigators; but so long as the highest authorities are disagreed, it is folly to dogmatize upon the matter, as though it treated of nought but ascertained fact in the natural history of man.

The real merit of phrenology is, that it has directed inquiry to the structure of the brain and the nervous system, and succeeded in drawing forth many interesting facts which otherwise would have been to this time enveloped in darkness. Had it been content with taking its place as one peculiar branch of human physiology, it would have appeared in a light perfectly unobjectionable to the most rigidly philosophical minds; but its ambition has, to a great extent, been its bane. To a certain degree, however, it must still be admitted, that phrenology in the physiological department has proved successful. It has elucidated the close connexion existing between the brain and our mental manifestations; it has led to many experiments with reference to the effect of cerebral injury or dis-

The fairest tests of these are to be found, as Dr. Holland has justly remarked, not in vague and ill-defined moral propensities, but in a few simple and well-marked faculties, such as those of numerical calculation, language, or music, which have no others in actual opposition to them, and the degree of perfection in which can be clearly defined. We hear much from phrenologists as to their successful application of these tests, but we do not hear of the instances of failure. The author's own experience of their determinations, however, has certainly led him to the belief that failure is nearly as frequent as success."

tortion upon the intellect and the feelings ; it has educes many highly curious facts as to the seat of the emotions, the intellectual faculties, and the propensities ; it has, in a word, thrown a light upon our knowledge generally of the functions of the encephalon, which did not exist before, and so far has conferred a benefit upon the science of man which it were uncandid not to acknowledge. *But with these its physiological researches, as it appears to us, the whole of its advantages terminate.*

To verify this opinion, we must come to the consideration of the other question we have stated, whether the physiological facts, allowing them to be correct, can serve as basis for a new system of intellectual philosophy ? Here we regard phrenology as a total failure, a failure, moreover, which might have been predicted in the outset with unerring certainty, by any reflective and philosophical mind. The reasons, on which this conclusion is founded, are of the following description :—

1. We should argue it from the very nature of the case. A system of intellectual philosophy must contain an analysis and classification both of our faculties and feelings ; it must give a complete enumeration of the elements of human knowledge ; and it must trace them all to their real origin. The idea that all this can be accomplished by physiological observations, however valid and indubitable, can only arise from a total misunder-

standing of the whole question. I will suppose for a moment, that we knew nothing whatever *reflectively* of our own mental operations ; that the study of the human mind had not yet been commenced ; that none of its phenomena had been classified ; and that we were to begin our investigation of them upon the phrenological system, some notion of which had been previously communicated to us : we might in this case proceed with our operations with the greatest ardour, and examine skull after skull for a century ; but this would not give us the least notion of a peculiar mental faculty, or aid us in the smallest degree in classifying mental phenomena. We could never know that the organs of the reasoning powers were in the front, and those of the moral feelings upon the top of the head, unless we had first made those powers and feelings *independently* the objects of our examination. The whole march of phrenology goes upon the supposition, that there is a system of intellectual philosophy already in the mind, and its whole aim is to shew, where the seat, materially speaking, of the faculties we have *already* observed really is to be found. Either our various powers and susceptibilities are known and classified before we begin any outward observations, or they are not. If they are already known and classified, then phrenology has nothing to do with the discovery ; if they are not, then assuredly we can never find them out by mere external observ-

ation upon the skull ; we can never turn them up to view by the scalpel of the anatomist, nor find them impressed upon the outward form of the brain. If every organ had its name and nature inscribed upon it by the Creator, then we should have a system of psychology at once ; but so long as this is not the case, we must observe and classify our mental phenomena by reflection, before we can begin to map out the locality in which they are to be found.

Strictly speaking, phrenology cannot reveal a single intellectual fact, which was not equally known before ; it cannot trace any points of human knowledge to their primary elements ; it cannot perform in any case a single analysis of our complex notions ; in a word, it can do nothing, allowing its facts to be all true, but point out a certain connexion between two parallel series of mental and physical phenomena. If any one should be inclined to urge, that the very circumstances of different feelings or faculties operating in connexion with certain portions of the brain, is a clue to a correct classification of them, then we must come to another remark, and point out,

2. The extreme indefiniteness, which attaches itself to all phrenological observation. We are willing to allow, that the general divisions of the phrenological system are correct. The researches of Tiedeman, quite apart from phrenology, and of others, who followed in his footsteps, have abund-

antly shewn that there is a regular progression in the nerves and brain of all animated beings, from the most imperfect up to man himself. They have discovered, moreover, that the human brain, in its gradual formation, assumes obscurely at different periods all the various types which are found in the animal creation, and that, consequently, man's organic superiority consists of *super-additions* made upon that which the lower genera possess, and not in a total dissimilarity from them. This being admitted, the phrenological principle naturally follows, that we must regard those parts of the brain, which man possesses in common with animals, as the organs of the animal propensities, and those parts which he possesses over and above the mere animal as the organs of our superior intelligence, and moral feelings. But admitting all this, what do we learn from it, *as far as intellectual philosophy goes*, beyond what was equally known before? We did not require any phrenological aid to convince us, that the animal passions, the moral feelings, and the intellect, present three different classes of phenomena which cannot be perfectly resolved into each other; so that, in the main divisions of phrenology, at least, we have no fresh assistance given us in classifying purely psychological phenomena, but only in judging of the physical processes which stand in connexion with them.

But now, if we descend from the main divisions

of phrenology to the details of the system (from which alone any new light could originate to aid our classification), here we find so much indefiniteness, that it is absolutely impossible to rely upon its indications as philosophically correct. When we attempt to classify the facts of our consciousness by reflection, we have no very great difficulty in forming a general outline of them. Sensation, perception, memory, judgment, as also the different passions, all possess certain indubitable marks by which they are distinguished from each other ; but when we come to consider the various organs which phrenology assumes, we find such a complete comingling of all the simple elements of our mental phenomena, as to render a close analysis of them impossible. Take, for example, such organs as concentrativeness or adhesiveness, and say what peculiarity they contain which can have an independent existence subjectively, or which may not be resolved into other elements. The duration or pertinacity of any mental exertion, one would think, must depend chiefly upon the *motives* we have for keeping our attention fixed upon the object before us. I may have, in fact, very large and very small concentrativeness at the same time, just according to the subject on which I am engaged, and the interest I feel in it. Take, again, the organ of philoprogenitiveness, and say why there should be a natural propensity and a particular lobe of brain, which excites love to children,

and none by which we are induced to love parents, or brothers, or anything else. Love in the one case is surely as real and as peculiar as in the other. Place together, again, comparison and ideality, both of which enter so largely into the poetical temperament, or consider the elements of mind which could lead us to manifest order or locality, and we find that, instead of aiding our analysis of mental phenomena, these different organs confuse us in every attempt we make to arrive at simple and primary elements. In no sense whatever, as it appears to us, does phrenology assist in forming a correct classification of our faculties and susceptibilities, but rather throws obstacles in the way by assuming a large number of irreducible elements, between many of which it is impossible to find any fundamental distinction, when due allowance has been made for the influence of habit and of circumstances.

Again, great indefiniteness attaches to phrenological observations from the various influences that disturb the fundamental law, upon which the whole system proceeds, namely, "That the power of any mental feeling or faculty is measured directly by the size of the organ." Now, it is admitted on all hands, that education greatly alters the *power* of our faculties without enlarging the organ, and, consequently, it must throw a disturbing influence into the operation of the law above stated, which in a thousand instances will render it nugatory.



Every one has some kind of education, and, consequently, it is certain that there will be some faculties in all, which will not shew themselves in direct proportion to the size of their several organs. The same may be said with regard to the organs, which have a diseased action, in which case it is asserted by the phrenologists that there may be prodigious power without any corresponding size in the development. And who is to say, when the brain is healthy; or whether or no there may not be disease in some part of it, which completely nullifies the relation supposed to exist between power and size. Taking these things into account, we doubt whether the slightest aid could be ever afforded by phrenology in analyzing our mental phenomena, nor do we believe that a classification, grounded upon the position of the organs, can be in any way so satisfactory, as one which is grounded upon an accurate observation of the phenomena themselves.\*

3. With regard to some of the most important problems of metaphysics and morals, phrenology has never attempted any solution at all.

Suppose, for example, that in place of Dr. Reid, some ardent phrenologist had set himself to oppose the advancing scepticism of David Hume. How would he, in the outset, have grappled with the ideal, or, as we would rather term it, the repre-

\* *Vide* Appendix, Note D.

sentationalist system which lay at the base of the whole controversy? Once shake man's confidence in the reality of his sense-perceptions, and it is not, neither can it ever be, in the power of a philosophy which is built entirely upon external observation, to venture a single reply to any of the objections which the sceptic may have to offer. If our senses themselves deceive us, of course it will not do to trust the very observations upon which all phrenology is based. We strongly suspect that in such a dilemma the phrenologist would be glad to take refuge in the citadel of *common sense* or some such reflective principle, and leave his developments to fight an easier battle. Again, what can phrenology say in the great dispute respecting cause and effect, and the belief we derive from thence in a great first cause, the Author of the whole creation? Against the argument of Hume, that our notion of cause, and our confidence in the regularity of nature, are simply the results of association, it has nothing to bring forward except the fact, that we have an organ of causality, upon which such a belief is grounded. But to this it might be replied, how have you discovered this organ of causality, and why do you assign such a function to certain of the anterior lobes? The only possible answer on the part of the phrenologist is, that he has observed the idea of causality really to exist in the human mind, and assigned it, by due observation, its place upon the map of the skull. It turns out

after all, then, that we must fall back upon a purely mental analysis, and without any further evidence, suppose this analysis to be correct ; so that the real argument of the phrenologist is a complete circle, the truth of the mental analysis verifying the organ, and the organ, in its turn, verifying the truth of the analysis. In all this there is really not one available step taken in analyzing our idea of causality, nor are we an inch nearer any discovery of the ground upon which our confidence in a first cause reposes.

It is useless to enumerate particularly the other problems, which have most taxed the powers of the metaphysical analyst ; but just in the same manner it might be shewn that upon the question of the spirituality of the mind ; upon such notions as those of time and space ; upon the great idea of infinity with all that it involves ; upon the personality or non-personality of the human reason ; upon the absolute or relative character of human knowledge ; that, in brief, upon all such fundamental points in metaphysics, phrenology sheds not a single beam to aid us in the research. The only thing it attempts is to ridicule the questions themselves, which is a method of treating them equally easy and ignoble.

If we turn from metaphysical to ethical philosophy, the same aptitude at eschewing, rather than solving difficulties is visible in the whole proceeding of phrenology. Upon the fundamental question of human liberty (the very first condition on which

the possibility of our being moral and accountable creatures rests) phrenology has nothing whatever to advance. It neither determines how far we are free agents, nor how far we are bound down to the law of necessity, but leaves the whole subject standing exactly where it was before the light it lays claim to broke in upon the world. The same complaint follows us if we consider the two great problems of moral philosophy: first, what is conscience? and, secondly, what is virtue? Conscience, according to phrenology, is the combined action of benevolence, veneration, and conscientiousness. But on what ground, we ask, is morality made to depend upon the approbation of these three organs more than on any other? Are not all the organs as well as these three equally a part of our nature? Why may not the approbation of secretiveness, acquisitiveness, destructiveness, or of self-esteem be as good a test of what is right as that of the three organs just mentioned? Or on what principle, if any, is *their* especial superiority maintained? The only reply we have to such questions is, that these emotions are *felt* to have a commanding authority conferred on them, and that we can give no other account of the order of our nature, except that it has pleased God so to constitute us. After all the boast, then, about organs, as affording a clear foundation on which to erect a system of moral philosophy, it appears that we must still have recourse to our inward

consciousness, in order to tell us which organs possess a moral authority, and which do not. The very point of the difficulty, therefore, is here untouched. We are simply told, consult your consciousness, and you will find what is right or wrong—a maxim which was often enjoined long before phrenology dawned upon mankind. With regard to the other question, what is virtue? the case is very similar with the last. The whole difficulty of the matter is evaded by saying that the ground of morals is neither utility, nor the will of God, nor the approbation of conscience *alone*, but all these conjoined, so that all the benefit which phrenology confers upon us in this dispute is to patch the other theories together, and make a composite one infinitely more untenable than any of the other three.\*

We repeat, therefore, in conclusion, what we have already urged, that phrenology ought to have taken its place as one branch of physiological investigation; that, viewed in such a character, it has succeeded in educing many interesting and valuable facts respecting the material changes which accompany the exercise of thought and feeling; but that, in attempting to take its stand as a system of intellectual philosophy, it has entirely mistaken its proper place, and totally

\* These explanations of ethical questions on the principles of phrenology are taken from Combe's "Moral Philosophy."

failed in throwing any light whatever upon moral or metaphysical researches.

Here, then, we shall close our observations upon the non-materialist class of sensational physiologists, and proceed to consider that complete development of sensationalism which has been exhibited to the present age in the writings of professed MATERIALISTS.

To clear the way for this, we shall just take a glance at the history of materialism in England after the time of Hobbes, and attempt to discover, in this way, the different phases it has assumed. In 1665, a treatise was published in London under the signature of R. O., in which the doctrine of materialism, and man's natural mortality was sustained on the ground more especially of certain theological opinions which the author had adopted. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, Zachary Housel, one of the French refugees, published a defence of materialism in a kind of colloquial form, for which he was prosecuted and tried at the Old Bailey. About the same time some tracts were published by Henry Layton, a barrister-at-law, in which the natural mortality and homogeneity of man were argued with great acuteness. A similar attempt was made by Dr. Coward, who published, in 1702, a work (which was condemned and burnt) entitled, "Second Thoughts concerning Human Soul, demonstrating the notion of Human Soul, as believed to be a Spiritual and Immaterial

Substance, united to Human Body, to be an Invention of Heathens, and not consonant to the Principles of Philosophy, Reason, or Religion." In 1757 another physician, Dr. Robinson, published a treatise precisely of a similar nature, which thus completes a list of five authors between Hobbes and Priestley, who supported materialism chiefly upon theological grounds.

Priestley revived the *philosophical* materialism of Hobbes, supposing, in common with that author, that our very ideas are material essences; while Darwin went forward with the superstructure until he laid upon it the top stone, an account of which we have already furnished in the second chapter of this work. From that time almost to the present hour, nothing of any importance has appeared either on the part of theological or philosophical materialism. A few experiments like those of Darwin have been made occasionally by naturalists, and here and there a second-rate writer of the theological school has appeared, who has followed in the footsteps of the five above mentioned; but, upon the whole, we may consider the controversy to have rested virtually in one and the same position since the reply of Brown to Darwin's "Zoonomia." In the meantime, phrenology has prepared the way for another phase of materialism, which now manifests itself through the writings of Dr. Elliotson and Engledue, of mesmeric reputation, and is regularly advocated in the pages of the "Zoist."

The principles of this school of cerebral physiology are very clear and very simple. According to their view, the sole object of human research is *matter* ; the term mind is a mere fiction, under which we hide our ignorance of certain recondite physical operations ; to speak intelligibly, the only mind which man possesses is the brain ; thought is nothing more than cerebation ; and the highest qualities both of the intellectual and the moral feelings, nothing but the direct result of a superior organization. These results are sustained by an abundant appeal to our ignorance of any spiritual principle ; by a reference to the progressive development of the nerves and brain in the different gradations of animal life ; and, lastly, by the startling facts which are presented upon the subject of animal magnetism.

The three phases of materialism, then, which modern times present are, according to the above statements, 1, that of the theologian ; 2, that of the naturalist ; 3, that of the cerebral physiologist. Into the theological argument it is not our place to enter, since it rests upon scriptural rather than philosophical grounds. With regard, however, to the philosophical phases of materialism, there are a few considerations we have to present, which may place the question, at least to some minds, in a clearer position than that, in which they have been accustomed to view it. These considerations refer to two points ; first, to the *method* of philosophical



research, and, secondly, to the *results*. Both the naturalist and the phrenologist, in so far as they uphold the doctrines of materialism, appear to us to be involved in much confusion, as it regards each of these points of enquiry. The whole discussion may perhaps be reduced to these two fundamental questions:—1st, Whether intellectual science must be confined to the observation and classification of outward facts, or whether it must not ultimately rest upon the ground of our inward consciousness; and, 2dly, Whether there is really any evidence for holding the spirituality of mind, or whether matter must be regarded as the ultimate principle of thought and feeling. Whatever facts of a material nature may be evolved by physiological research, still these two problems will equally remain to be discussed upon purely metaphysical grounds.

And first, with regard to the method of philosophical investigation, materialists frequently argue in the following manner:—The human mind, whatever its essence, is originally a blank; by its contact with the outer world, it gains sensations and ideas. All knowledge, accordingly, comes through the senses; and all philosophy must be the result of observation and experience. To study man, as well as anything else, aright we must simply observe the facts which present themselves to us by means of our sense-perceptions; all reasoning, therefore, upon inward consciousness in the philosophy of

man is to be given up, as being productive of nought but uncertainty and confusion; and intellectual science, if its facts fall not under the observation of the senses, is to be regarded as a mere imaginary province, lying quite beyond the true region of human knowledge.

Now admitting, for a moment, that all our knowledge is gained by means of observations made upon external phenomena, how is it, we would ask, that our observations are to be classified, arranged, and formed in those general principles of which knowledge, properly so called, alone consists. Isolated facts will never raise up a superstructure of valid science, unless they are linked together by some fundamental conception; neither will the observation of such facts, in any sense, bear the name of philosophy, unless they are pursued with a definite aim before us, and all made to tell upon the elimination of certain general truths. Sensationalists, of the extreme school, are apt to forget that there is a logic of *induction* as well as *deduction*, having rational axioms at its foundation; and that without these axioms, or at any rate without the truths, which they embody, being in the mind, the outward observation whereon they so firmly rely would be altogether nugatory. When the astronomer, for example, describes the eclipses which are to take place within the next year, upon what does he ground the certainty of his observation? Not upon *experience*, for that can only refer

to the past ; not upon mathematical reasoning only, for that has to do simply with abstract and necessary relations. He grounds it upon the confidence he feels in the regularity of the laws of nature ; a confidence which arises from the constitution of our own minds, and is verified as a fact only by reflection upon our inward consciousness.

Again, on what principle does the materialist himself investigate the phenomena of organization, which he would fain substitute for those of our consciousness ? Does he really do nothing but observe facts ? And, if he were confined to this, could he ever boast a single scientific result ? No ; so far from that, the moment he commences, as a physiologist, to investigate the functions of the animal frame, he shews that he is acting upon an *a priori principle*, a principle not derived from observation, but one upon which, in fact, the validity of all observation rests. There is a conviction in his mind prior to all actual research, that every organ, which may be laid bare by the scalpel, performs a certain function, and has a final cause. Were the anatomist, neglecting this, merely to record *what he sees*, and to put down facts in their isolation, physiology as a *science* could never exist. The bond, which unites his facts into a veritable branch of science, are certain fundamental axioms, whose office is to shew the causal connexion which those facts have with each other. To admit such a connexion the physiologist has no scruple ; it

forms, indeed, the very method and incentive to his labour; and yet, while he is pressing forward without a doubt as to his plan, he appears often quite blinded to the fact, that he is acting upon a purely *à priori* principle, which nothing but consciousness could ever reveal, and the truth of which can only flow from the validity of the subjective laws of our nature. There is neither an organ nor a function which he observes, respecting which he does not profess a certainty that it has a cause and an end, even though both should be completely unknown; and upon this conviction he does not hesitate to proceed onwards in his research until they shall both be discovered.

“The improvement of physiology,” remarks Dugald Stewart, in some observations upon Cuvier’s researches, “is to be expected chiefly from the lights furnished by analogy; but in order to follow this guide with safety, a *cautious and refined logic* is still more necessary than in conducting those reasonings which rest on the direct evidence of experience.” And again, M. Jouffroy beautifully remarks, in his Preface to Stewart’s Moral Philosophy:—“Nature is a drama of which *reason* only teaches the plot. To the eye of sense the world of phenomena is merely an ever-varying collection of isolated facts; a spectacle which has no significance. Its mystery is unfolded to us by reason alone, which reveals in every phenomenon the consequence and the principle of another; and in the aggregate of all

phenomena, an immense chain of causes and effects, of which universal order is the admirable result. And such is the simplicity of this revelation, that it is entirely comprised in the conception of the absolute law of every phenomenon ; a conception apparently trivial, but, in fact, most fruitful and sublime. This conception is the fundamental axiom in all the sciences of facts, the torch which guides their researches and the soul which animates their method ; the procedure of the physiologists in the study of the phenomena of life, is derived from it as a natural consequence.”\*

Let the ardent advocate of mere objective knowledge, then, consider, that, however extensively he may build his conclusion upon outward facts, yet there are *subjective* principles upon which he must necessarily proceed, on which the whole superstructure of his scientific research, whatever branch it be, must be erected, and without which his knowledge would be all disjointed, and his real progress impossible. However eagerly the mind may go forth for a time to grasp the varied forms of nature, yet there will, assuredly, arrive a period when the objective movement will have run its length, when the soul's centripetal force will begin to react, when the great subjective movements in which the whole of man's activity originates will come forth to light, and when intellectual philo-

\* To see this subject fully discussed, the reader is referred to Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences."

sophy will resume the position from which it has been ejected.

The attempt of the naturalist to account for the phenomena of thought and feeling by outward observation, is much on an equality with that of the phrenologist to localise the faculties, by merely observing certain visible developments. In the latter case we shewed, that the very classification aimed at was supposed to be already made, and that we *must* have observed the various faculties in all their peculiarity before any position could possibly be assigned them. In the same manner must there be to the physiologist a firm conviction and a clear conception of all our various mental operations, before the very notion of finding their physical causes could be entertained.

In brief, the result of these considerations is this:—There are two classes of facts equally certain and equally clear, those, namely, of outward observation, and of inward consciousness, which can never be resolved into each other, but which must both form the materials of true philosophical research. If we take the external world alone as our starting point, we can never deduce from it the phenomena of mind, *i. e.*, we can never succeed in shewing how the properties of matter can possibly be compatible with, or lead to, thought, feeling, and reasoning: and, on the contrary, if we start simply upon the facts of consciousness, allowing *that* only to be real which is deduced rationally from them,

we can never succeed in getting beyond the circle of our own subjective being, so as to prove, by logical inference, the existence of a world without Self, with its pregnant consciousness, is one world; nature, with its varied changes, another; each resting upon its own evidence: but, as all knowledge is *subjective*, *à priori* principles must lie at the basis even of physical science, while physical science, in its turn, may in some of its branches throw light upon the workings of mind in its present close relation with the material world. The question, then, as to the real nature of the "*philosophy of man*," we consider, can admit but of one rational reply, namely, that the physiologist and psychologist have their own separate sciences, their own separate facts, and their own separate conclusions; that both proceed on sure grounds, and may evolve in their own department sure results; but lastly, that the one of these branches may often be employed to throw light upon the other.

We now proceed to the other, and the far more difficult point of dispute between the materialist and the immaterialist, namely, what is the ultimate principle of thought in man? is it homogeneous with matter? or, is there a mind essentially distinct? Now, first, there is not much difficulty in exploding the vulgar appeal to common sense, by which the more shallow and thoughtless materialist attempts to shake the ordinary belief of

humanity in a thinking soul distinct from the body. He says (in an argument which, in fact, begs the whole question), shew me the mind; point it out to the perception of any of the senses; prove to me in this way that the belief in it is not a mere delusion; give me the same strength of evidence for its existence, as I can furnish you for the existence of matter, and I am content. We reply, what is your evidence for the existence of matter? You talk about touching and seeing it, but what is it that sees, and what that feels? Is it the brain? If so, *prove* it on your own principles. Shew me any physical process—any action of the nerves, or commotion in the cerebrum, that corresponds with a sensation or with the judgment, that I have an external object now lying before me. Where is the analysis of matter, however refined, which has resulted in a thought or a feeling; or, who has traced the action of the nerves up, step by step, until he has come palpably and sensibly to an emotion? You know of the existence of matter simply because you *feel* that it exists; but that feeling is purely a fact of your inward consciousness, which, upon your principles, has no certainty or reality about it. Be consistent at once; give up everything as veracious which has not external evidence; and give up, therefore, the inward feeling upon which your confidence in a material world rests.

If the materialist rejoins, that the various feelings



and judgments, of which we are conscious, are mere phenomena, which need not imply the existence of an invisible spiritual *essence*, we also rejoin, that hardness, or extension, or size are merely phenomena, which need not on the same ground imply a real material essence. Whether we regard the properties of body or mind, the subjoining to them of an essence or substratum is equally a process of *reason*, and the result is, a judgment or belief which in one case is no more certain than the other. The one says, I *must* believe in matter, and there is an end of the discussion; the other says, with an equally final decision, and I, too, *must* believe in mind: in both cases alike there is a falling back upon the evidence of consciousness. The appeal to common sense, then, is altogether retortable, and leaves the whole question *in statu quo*; both matter and mind resting on exactly equivalent evidence, be it sufficient or insufficient.

Now, as the whole discussion respecting the immateriality of mind has from its very nature been most fruitful in misunderstanding and logomachy, let us see in what the combatants ordinarily speaking really agree and in what they differ. With regard to the facts of consciousness, which we term thought, feeling, will, &c., there is no dispute; all admit that we do think, that we do feel, that we do will; to deny this would imply a mere play upon words which it were not worth while to notice or refute. Again, both parties admit certain facts

relating to the physical conditions of thought or sensation. They admit that we have a nervous system, that this is affected by impressions from without, that it has its centre in the brain, and that there is a certain action of the brain, either in whole or in part, corresponding with all the manifestations of intelligence or feeling. Now, these things being admitted, we pause, and ask—are there any more facts, beside those we have mentioned, to which either party can appeal? The facts of physiology are granted on the one side, those of consciousness are granted on the other, and this is all, *absolutely all*, that any one can possibly know from direct observation, whether it be external or internal. The point, then, at which the materialist and the immaterialist commence their diverging courses, is just where they have run the full length of actual observation, and begin to reason or to theorize upon what they observe.

The material physiologist reasons thus:—Here is a wonderful piece of organization, the human body, producing the most extraordinary operations. Here is the stomach, which performs the functions of digestion; here the liver, which secretes the bile; here the brain, which produces thought and emotion. If we injure the stomach or the liver, we disturb the processes which they were intended to carry on; and so, if we injure the brain, it is found that we equally affect the processes of thought and feeling. In the two former cases we assign nothing

beyond the material organs as necessary to give the observed result, and why, then, should we assign anything beyond the brain as necessary to account for the phenomena of mind? Let us find out what matter *can* do, before we begin to say what it cannot. The spiritualist, on the contrary, reasons upon the same facts in a different strain. Here are thoughts, feelings, volitions, he urges, which have nothing in common with material changes, nothing with chemical processes; and what can the entire difference observable in the phenomena (which in the former case we cannot *conceive* to result from the mere collocation of material particles), indicate to us, but another and a spiritual substance, which we term mind?

Now it will be seen at once that these two explanations are in fact both of them *hypotheses*, either of which may be made to account for the facts of the case, but which we have to judge of in the absence of actual demonstration according to their relative *probability*. The dogmatical assumptions of absolute certainty so common on either side, as also the contemptuous imputations of absurdity, must be given up by the calm inquirer, and he must view the case as one, which at present can only rest upon probable evidence. The whole of our attempt, then, in the present instance, is to estimate probabilities, which we shall accordingly do as carefully as possible.

Against the materialist hypothesis, then, there

are various objections, which appear stronger just in proportion as we are less under the influence of the senses, and more under the influence of pure reason.

1. There is usually among this class of thinkers an entire neglect of the notion of *power* or *force*. We contend, that whenever changes take place in the material world, we have a distinct idea of power exerted in the production of the phenomena, over and above the mere co-existence of the objects. Any two material bodies, we know, tend to move towards each other ; this is all we actually understand about the phenomenon ; and we express our knowledge, and at the same time hide our ignorance, by saying that it takes place by the *law of gravitation*. But the *law* of gravitation, it is clear, cannot move a world or a particle ; to do this requires *force*, neither can we possibly divest our minds of this notion, when we see hard, dull, inanimate matter, hurled through space, and made to perform complicated and harmonious revolutions. All causes, then, as implying power, are spiritual in their nature ; we cannot possibly reduce them to the idea of matter, in fact, we never conceive of any force producing change, except under the type of the exertion and energy of our own will moving the material particles of our bodily frame.\*

\* This is clearly and forcibly stated by Sir Jno. Herschell, in his "Preliminary Discourse," p. 86.

The existence of efficient causes, we are well aware, is very widely disputed; but in addition to their reality being distinctly asserted by the most philosophical minds of the age, we cannot but think that their truth is tacitly admitted by the whole spirit of physical research; to wit, by the perpetual effort that is made to discover the process which goes on between any antecedent and its consequent. Take the case of digestion as an illustration of the principle we are affirming. The stomach is the organ or instrument in this process; but no one can suppose that it is *the cause*. There must be some *chemical force*, whose operation we very imperfectly understand, by which the change denoted by digestion is accomplished; and even if we were to get one step nearer than we are to the "modus operandi," we should still look for another yet more recondite, and so on, until we had attributed the "primum mobile," to a force of a purely spiritual kind. Universally, the *knots* or *joints* which unite phenomena are the grand subjects of physical investigation; it is here that we find more subtle essences in operation; here we discover new processes; neither will our reason permit us to rest until the senses are baffled, and we are obliged to admit the real existence of a power, which is, indeed, beyond our perception; but *rationally* cognisable by its effects. Materialists, from the habit they contract, of admitting nothing beyond what is visible and palpable, are ever in

danger of confounding the *organ* of a function with the *cause*. They say, for example, that it is the stomach which digests, and the liver which secretes bile; which, in fact, is saying nothing at all beyond the fact, that these are *localities* in which such operations are carried on: but as to the principle of these operations, we must look for a power to which nothing material has the slightest resemblance, and the secret nature of which it is pretty certain we shall never fully understand in our present state of existence.

From the functions just mentioned, let us now turn to the functions performed by the brain. Here we see, that in connection with certain changes in the particles of the cerebrum, we experience thoughts, feelings, emotions, joys and sorrows, peace or excitement. The materialist says, that these molecular changes, or rather the various states of brain consequent upon them, and termed by him *cerebration*, *are* thoughts and feelings: but there is here an evident confounding of the instrument with the cause. Power there must assuredly be, in order that the prodigious effects of mind may be produced; for, to say nothing of the intellectual features of the case, there must be some force exerted, when the particles of the cerebrum, of the nervous system, and of the sinews of the muscular frame, are thrown into movement. The only difference between this case and the former ones is, that in those purely physical

operations, the force employed, as far as our observation goes, is perfectly recondite, that it acts without our perception, although, indeed, we can easily observe its effects. On the other hand, mental force is an object of direct consciousness; it is, in fact, the only force respecting which we have any knowledge of its mode of operation, and thus becomes the type by which we conceive of all other forces existing in nature.

We observe a movement in the digestive organs, and digestion is the result. We know that some power must have been in operation, but we do not comprehend in what its nature consists. So, also, we observe a movement in the cerebral particles and muscular movement follows; but here, unlike the former case, there is a *conscious* force, that of the will, which we feel to have been the more remote cause of the whole phenomenon. In brief, wherever we see change or motion, there we necessarily imagine some power adequate to the production of the effect. In digestion there is the digestive *power*, in animation there is the vital *power*, both known to exist, but unknown in their nature, except so far as it may be gathered from their effects. In the case of mind, then, we observe as effects, thoughts, feelings, emotions; and on the same principle we attribute these to a thinking power, a feeling power, and emotive power, of which we are personally conscious, and which, whatever it may be, we term mind or soul

in its various manifestations. We conclude, therefore, that if all causes, of whatever nature, are spiritual, mind being a conscious and intelligent cause can lay, of all others, the first claim to have the notion of spirituality attached to it.

If it be said that this view of the case would assert the existence of some spiritual essence wherever phenomena take place, and wherever power is displayed in nature, as well as in man, we admit the inference. All natural phenomena bear upon them the impress of a *divine spirit*. My own finite effort I attribute to the agency of my own finite mind, the infinite power that acts around me I attribute to the presence of the infinite mind. God is revealed in every natural phenomenon, as surely as self is revealed in every effort of the will. The one idea of spontaneity, personality, will, is that which will for ever baffle both the materialist and the atheist; it contains the germ of that belief which humanity ever has felt, and ever will maintain, in a *soul*, and in a *God*.

2. From what we have just said, it follows that materialists, in assigning a bodily organ as the principle of mind, do *not* give so clear an explanation of the facts of the case as those who hold existence of spirit.

Here are certain intellectual phenomena, which all admit;—it is required to know how they come into existence. The materialist says they are the direct result of certain movements in the brain.



But this, in fact, is only evading the real question. How is it, we would ask, that the brain is subjected to these movements, and what is the force employed in producing them? The materialist gives no satisfactory answer to this question, while the spiritualist assigns a real power or cause, which is amply equivalent to the observed effects. Both must admit a power of some kind; if the lobes of brain, for example, which subserve the faculty of memory, reasoning, or comparison, are excited, there must be some force or other employed; the one, accordingly, attempts no explanation of it; the other gives an explanation which, even though admitted hypothetical, is nevertheless highly probable and satisfactory.

3. The system of materialism, particularly that form of it, which assigns different functions to the various portions of the brain, does not even attempt to explain the psychological phenomena of the *will*. The operation of all the various organs is manifestly under some superior control. There is a power which either excites or represses the working of the faculties, and which is not at all taken into account by those, who regard the cerebrum as *an assemblage* of such faculties bound together by no perceptible tie. The will, to which we attribute this power, is an untiring energy, unimpaired either by labour or disease. Continued thought is always exhausting, and the indulgence of emotions is exhausting also; both of which facts would indicate

that each of these processes is carried on by a material instrumentality; but the will is ever the same; the sense of personality never grows weary, is never lost by any kind of physical injury; and herein it is, therefore, that we should place the essence of mind, as an ever acting and ever unwearyed source of energy and power. It should be observed, that we do not put forward these arguments as decisive of the case now under review, but merely as considerations which shew that the materialist hypothesis is not so satisfactory and so capable of explaining all the facts we have before us, as it sometimes lays claim to; much less a theory which admits of those lofty pretensions to clearness and simplicity, which it sometimes assumes.

On the other hand, there are several considerations which tend much to strengthen the probability of the spiritualist hypothesis.

1. There is the *unity* which pervades all mental phenomena. However varied our thoughts, however complicated our emotions, however numerous our volitions, yet they are all referred by consciousness to one and the same individual self. To account for the unity of our conscious being is by no means easy upon the materialist hypothesis, whichever way it be viewed. Phrenological materialism, the most rational of all, is completely baffled in explaining this phenomenon; inasmuch as it is impossible to shew, in what manner a conscious unity can result from an assemblage of

organs, each one of which thinks or feels for itself. If it be said, that there is something common to all the organs, by virtue of which they are felt to belong to the same being, then we ask what is this something which *is felt*, or what is this being which *feels*, independently of the cerebral parts of which the materialist supposes it to consist. If they be referred to some material point in the centre of the brain, then this point is in fact the mind, the real self; and the brain is only the instrumentality by which it acts. Moreover, such a point, in order not to be divisible, must be an atom or a monad, and thus we are landed somewhere in the centre of the Leibnitzian philosophy, the tendency of which, when made intelligible, is to support an ideal or dynamical theory of the creation. But if it be supposed that there is something in common actually in contact with all the organs, by virtue of which there is a felt connexion between them, then it were well to consider whether this is possible or intelligible except on the hypothesis of a spiritual principle, which manifests itself in and through the cerebral organization. If the materialist, however, still further should take up the principle, that the whole brain thinks, just as the whole stomach digests, then we ask how can the juxtaposition of particles, not one of which has the property of thought, at length come to create it? Is there any imaginable correspondence between such juxtaposition as cause, and thoughts

or pleasures or pains as effects; and can a mere movement of the brain, without any other force being implied, be rationally supposed to wield the strong and nervous muscles of the human body? The answer to this brings us to another remark in favour of spiritualism, namely,

2. That it assigns a more adequate cause to account for the given effects.

The whole nature of mental phenomena is such, that it does far less violence to our reason to suppose that a spiritual principle is in operation within us, than to rest satisfied with the notion, that the matter itself of which the brain is composed can think, or feel, or of itself produce physical exertion. Where there must be hypothesis of some kind, it is by far better to accept that, which appears most adequate, especially if, instead of straining and wrenching our fundamental notions of material properties, it offers a plain and simple solution of the facts which come before us.

The properties of matter in all its varied forms are extension and resistance; on the other hand, as far as experience goes, there is in it a total negation of thought and consciousness; and this being the case, it is only by stripping it of all, which we have before known it to possess, and adding that, which was never before regarded as one of its properties, that we can come to the conclusion, that matter or any combination of matter either thinks or feels.

3. The idea of the spirituality of mind better comports with the notions which mankind have ever entertained of its immortality. We would by no means represent the properties of spirituality and immortality as being so closely connected, that the one necessarily implies the other. There is nothing absurd in the notion of a material existence being eternal, or a spiritual one being perishable, if such be the will of the Creator; nevertheless, if there be any grounds, on which to look forward to a future life, it is unquestionable that the idea of a spiritual mind better comports with such a prospect, than that of a mind which results from material organization; and on this ground, the whole of the separate evidence for the immortality of the soul goes to strengthen the evidence for its spirituality. Putting, then, all these remarks together, we deny that there is any superior clearness in the materialist hypothesis; that it gets rid of a single difficulty; that it has peculiarly the suffrages of common sense; or that it is successful in explaining the phenomena, for which we have to account. On the contrary, we affirm that the spiritual hypothesis is equally comprehensible; that it is in much better keeping with the unity of our thoughts, feelings, and volitions; that it assigns a far more adequate cause to produce the given effects; and, lastly, that it comports better with the dignity and immortality of human nature. Setting, therefore, both hypotheses before us, and estimating their relative

*probabilities*, we have no hesitation in rejecting materialism, and still holding to that spirituality which we may term the common belief of mankind.

SECT. II.—*Modern Sensationalism in France.*

In the brief sketch we gave of the progress of sensationalism in France during the eighteenth century, we traced the development, and the various transformations of the philosophy of Locke through a succession of writers, who, while they popularized and adorned the school, to which they belonged, by a clearness and a brilliancy of style, which has been seldom equalled, and perhaps never excelled, yet shrank not from asserting and maintaining the most startling conclusions of materialism. All the mental operations were reduced by them simply to various forms of sensation; morals became a mere balancing of self-interest; the mind was regarded as the result of organization alone, to which it was absurd to ascribe the idea of immortality; while the name of God was made synonymous with nature, or altogether disowned. These principles we followed in their course up to the period of the revolution, which for a time absorbed the attention of every mind, bore along even the calmest thinkers with it in its fury, and allowed them no leisure, and perhaps no disposition, to reflect upon the more abstruse subjects of philosophy. No sooner, however, did the excitement of that stupendous event

begin to abate, than the purely philosophical element, which had for a time been lost in the political confusion, began to re-appear, and to excite a portion, though at first by no means a considerable portion, of public attention.

There was one spot in the vicinity of Paris which may be marked out as peculiarly the cradle of the rising philosophical spirit, and in which all those, whose names hold any prominent place in these early endeavours to revive the genius of Condillac, nurtured their young attempts. It was at Antueil that the chief promoters of these studies regularly met together, to discuss the most important philosophical problems; it was there that Cabanis, Garat, Destout Tracy, Volney, Maine de Biran, and others, matured in conjunction with each other many of the theories, which made so brilliant a début in the philosophical world, and excited, to so considerable a degree, the attention of metaphysicians throughout Europe.

Without dwelling, however, upon the more general features of sensationalism in its first appearance after the revolution, we shall proceed at once to take a rapid view of the writings of those, who gave it all its celebrity and its value. And in doing so, we cannot but remark, as somewhat a singular fact, that the four men, who not only stand at the head of this philosophy, (usually termed by themselves *ideology*,) but whose writings compose almost the whole of the accredited works

of that school, were born, two of them in the same year, and the other two within a very short period before or after. Cabanis and Volney were born in the year 1757, Destont de Tracy in 1754, and Garat in 1758.

Cabanis, to whom we must first direct our attention, had been in his early life both a disciple and a personal friend of Condillac. Under his guidance and tuition he had studied the philosophy of Locke, and had fully entered into the method, by which his French commentator attempted to complete it. All we know of Cabanis, therefore, before the revolution is, that he was a professed adherent to Condillac's philosophical opinions; and that, in accordance with them, he must have regarded all the active operations of the mind simply as forms of the one great sensitive faculty. Whether he had been pursuing his investigations on these points in retirement, while the political storm was raging without, we know not; but in the year 1799, just when the elements of discord became calm enough to allow the quiet prosecution of philosophy, he published, in the "Memoirs de l'Institute," his celebrated work on the relation subsisting between man's moral and physical constitution. ("Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme.") In this work he sought to complete the philosophy of Condillac, or rather to pursue that of Locke onwards, from the point at which he considered Condillac had stopped short. Locke had proved, as was *then* generally admitted,



the sensational origin of all our ideas ; Condillac, proceeding one step further, had shewn in what manner all the various mental operations, by which our ideas are modified, such as memory, judgment, abstraction, and others, might be philosophically reduced to sensation in its various transformations. Cabanis now proposed to investigate the nature and origin of *sensation* itself, and thus to furnish a clear deduction of all our intellectual notions, as well as moral feelings from the primary movements of our physical constitution. The result of these investigations was a theory, which from its extreme simplicity can be explained in a very few words.

The nervous system he considered to be the seat and the cause of all sensation, inasmuch as any part of the body becomes altogether insensible the very instant the nerves, which reside there, are severed from the rest of the system, of which they form a part. When an impression is made by an external object upon any of these nerves, it is instantly conveyed to the central organ. From this a reaction takes place, by which the impression is reconveyed to the extremities. This action and reaction, he shewed, must both exist, ere the sentiment or the impulse intended to be produced can take place. The whole process, then, of our intellectual as well as our moral feelings, Cabanis considered to be here developed with the most consecutive clearness and certainty. The moral feelings, the intellect, the will, all the various

faculties and emotions of the mind, were, on Condillac's principles, clearly reducible to sensation; but sensation he now proved to be an affection of the nerves: the inference was, that it is in the nerves alone, that the whole man consists, "*Les nerfs voilà tout l'homme.*" Such was the ultimate idea in which his philosophy terminated.

This theory, bold as it may appear, Cabanis supported with amazing talent and ingenuity. He shewed most clearly, how dependent our intellectual development, and moral feelings are upon a crowd of external circumstances; how they are modified by age, by sex, by natural temperament, by food, by climate, by a hundred other things of a purely physical nature. The argument derived from hence was manifest. The various changes of the external world and the different states of body, it was argued, operate upon the nerves, and the nerves, in accordance with these influences, give rise to all the varieties of mental and moral constitution observable between different races and different classes of mankind. Find out, then, by observation, all the external causes by which the nervous system is influenced, and you have, at the same time, all the elements which enter into our mental or moral nature, as well as the primary source from which all their phenomena are derived. The simplicity of this theory, the ease with which it could be grasped by all minds, however deficient in philosophical acumen, the popular

elegance with which it was conveyed, all tended to give it a very extensive reputation. "The physicians," says one of his French commentators, "accorded their thanks to the author for the learned physiological explication, which he gave them of man's moral nature ; the philosophers, even those who did not adopt his theory, were delighted with the relations he unfolded between the mind and the body ; the half-learned hoped by his means to acquire two sciences at once—physiology and psychology ; and every one profited, or thought that they profited, by his ideas."

Notwithstanding this success, however, Cabanis, who appears to have been an honest investigator of truth, saw reason, after a time, to shrink from his own system, and distrust his own conclusions. His views seemed gradually to veer round as he studied the subject less as a physiologist and more as a philosopher: added to this, he had too deep a sense of the sanctity both of morals and religion, to leave them open to the light esteem, if not contempt, which his own principles seemed to foster. In a second work, accordingly, which was published after his death, and which he terms "A Letter upon Primary Causes," we find him departing very decidedly from his original notions, and manifesting a retrograde tendency towards spiritualism in all the three departments of psychology, morals, and theology. With regard to the soul, he now asserts, that it cannot consist solely in the nervous system, but

that there must be a distinct and separate existence, by which the movements of our physical constitution are regulated and rendered intelligent: the moral faculty, moreover, he now saw reason to distinguish altogether from our bodily organization, as giving rise to an order of feelings and sentiments quite peculiar in their kind, and to which no mere sensation could offer any approach: while, with regard to religion, he enters a strong and earnest protest against the reigning Atheism of his time, avowing his belief, as he expresses it, "with the great Bacon, that, in order to deny in a formal and positive manner the existence of a primary cause, we must be as credulous as those, who admit the fables of mythology and the Talmud." Perhaps there is no other writer who gives in himself so complete an illustration as Cabanis, of the diversified shades of French philosophy from the time of Condillac to the rise of eclecticism. First of all we see him advocating the sentiments of Condillac, his friend and master; next we find him at the head of the materialist school, by which the opening of the present century was characterized; and lastly, in his posthumous writings, we view the germs of those truer and better principles by which materialism itself was destined so soon to be supplanted and destroyed. The literary life of Cabanis alone would furnish us with a history, tolerably complete, of the metaphysical systems of France in the last and present century.

The rise of the normal schools, and especially the formation of the national institute in the fourth year of the republic, gave a very considerable stimulus to the study of mental philosophy as well as the other sciences. At the head of the philosophical department of the former stood Garat—a man less known as a writer, than as a most celebrated lecturer and successful supporter of Condillac's metaphysical principles. The only original source from which we can now gain any knowledge of his lectures, is to be found in the archives of the normal schools; among which there are several volumes of philosophy from his pen. His general sentiments, however, are sufficiently known, inasmuch as to him mainly is due the increased attention which was paid during the first decade of the present century to philosophical questions in France. Of a far more cautious spirit than many of his predecessors, Garat confined his lectures to a comparatively small range of subjects. For the doctrines of ideology, properly so called, he argued with great power, and no inconsiderable depth; with a clearness not unworthy of Condillac himself he attempted to establish sensational perception as the basis of all our faculties; and in his programme of questions to be treated of in the normal schools, he furnished a plan of philosophical investigation, as consecutive in its parts, as it was symmetrical in its whole structure. For the application, however, of these principles to other points of

great importance, we look in vain to the lessons of our author. He was too prudent either to carry out morality to self-interest, or sensationalism to materialism; and too wise, after the scenes he had witnessed during the revolution, to draw any inferences that might be detrimental to the re-establishment of religious faith. As Cabanis was the physiologist of his schools, so Garat was the sober and cautious professor, adapting his instructions to the youthful mind, repressing their too great tendency to bold speculation, and saving the interests of morality and religion at the expence of advocating a narrowed and unimposing system of sensationalism.

Very different, in almost every respect, was the character of Volney, whom we must regard as the *moralist* of the ideological school. Volney was a bold follower in the footsteps of the Baron d'Holbach (to whose work, entitled "Système de la Nature," we have already referred), and has won celebrity as an ethical philosopher, not so much from the originality or depth of any of his views, as from the authorship of a catechism, where the principles of his school were briefly and clearly digested, and which came into general use among those, who preferred the morals of infidelity to those of the Bible. Following the opinions of that class of philosophers, who saw in man nothing but an organized mass, who considered the nervous system to be the sum total of human nature, who acknowledged no existence but matter, and no enjoyments

but those of sense, it was natural, nay, unavoidable, that his moral system should be based entirely upon pleasures and pains, aiming simply at the attainment of the one, and the avoidance of the other.

The fundamental idea, accordingly, of Volney's moral philosophy is *preservation*,—the preservation of our bodily frame, and our other external relations, in such a degree of perfection, as to afford us the greatest amount of physical pleasure. He knew no evil beside death, and that which tends to it; no good beside life, and the external pleasures it affords; and had no conception of moral obligation, beyond the duty of living so as to defer pain and death as long as possible, and secure as much as might be allowed of life, health, and outward comfort. In so far as virtue, sobriety, moderation, chastity, and the like, tend to the preservation of life, and the promotion of health, he enforced their observance, and in so far as the social and domestic duties add, in the long-run, to our security, peace, and tranquillity, he enjoined them as worthy our approbation and pursuit; but he considered no virtue to be a good abstracted from its influence upon our sensual happiness, and no vice to be an evil, if unaccompanied by its penalties and pains. In a word, he regarded man simply as an animal; the whole of his moral code aimed professedly at the preservation of his animal nature; neither did he shrink from defending murder itself as a virtue, wherever it tends to our

security or defence. In such a system as this, it is needless to say that the higher moral feelings were completely lost sight of; that everything disinterested was condemned as folly, and that the obligations of religion were set down as fit only for the dupes of priestcraft and superstition. In representing Volney, however, as the moralist of the ideological school, he should be far from affirming, that the rest of his supporters went similar lengths with ~~his~~ their contempt for religion, or that they were so completely sunk every nobler part of our nature in the mire of selfishness. We have unquestionably in him a complete negation of the morality to which sensationalism leads; while his catechism presents an extreme specimen of that moral arithmetic which, employing pleasures and pains as the ciphers, would *calculate* all the duties and obligations of human life.

In the writings of the three preceding authors whom we have noticed, there are easily recognised many qualities of mind which eminently fitted them for some branches of philosophical research, and which naturally gained for them a due share both of fame and influence with the public. The close observation of Cabanis, the clear arrangement of Garat, the logical order and brevity of Volney, amounting almost to the algebraical form of expression, all gave a great force and a great popularity to the ideas they advocated; but there was



yet a philosopher, living and labouring among them, who, if inferior in some other respects, still united in himself a power of analysis, a faculty of metaphysical abstraction, and an irrefragable logic, which has given him without doubt the first place among the sensationalists of his age.

It is to M. Destout de Tracy that the widespread fame of ideology is mainly due, and from his writings that its real philosophical character is almost universally estimated. There is, in the whole theory of this author, the same simplicity, the same exactness, the same clear precision, that we find in those, to whom we have already referred; but there is also a power of reasoning, and a depth of thought, both in analysis and in generalisation, which gives him a right to the honour of being, *par excellence*, the *metaphysician* of his school. One fault, however, is still apparent among his many better qualities, and that is, a deficiency in the faculty of observation, and a consequent indisposition to recur to the data, upon which his first principles rested. Give him his data ready-made, and his all-embracing logic builds you a super-structure, which seems as perfect as it is beautiful; but the truth is, perhaps, altogether lost sight of, that philosophical structures, as well as all others, must have foundations, which, if not laid firmly and cautiously, soon endanger the whole building. For first principles, M. Destout de Tracy had recourse simply to his predecessors, following Condillac

and Cabanis, the one in his psychological, the other in his physiological investigations. Having thence taken his start, he carries on his work with admirable precision, embracing everything important as he proceeds, until you see a whole system, in which nothing seems wanting till you examine the basis upon which it all reposes.

To illustrate, however, and justify these remarks, we shall just glance at the course of reasoning our author pursues in his "*Elemens d'Ideologie*," a work which has given its name to the system it upholds. First of all, we must premise, that the doctrine of Cabanis is there fully accepted,—a doctrine which supposes all sensation to result directly from the action of the nervous system, nay, which regards the nerves and the mind as synonymous terms, the one being the physiological, the other the psychological expression for the same thing. Next, the well-known theory of Condillac, to which we have so often made allusion, is elaborately upheld, according to which, thought, feeling, and all the varieties of the moral sentiments are but different variations of sensation. These may be regarded as the fundamental principles of the whole work, and it is in the full development of them, more particularly of the latter, that M. de Tracy has manifested the power and fertility of his mind.

In carrying out this development, he shews that the sensitive faculty, with which we are endowed, as the basis of our intellectual life, is susceptible

of a great variety of impressions of different kinds, and of different intensities. Of these impressions, of which four distinct species may be enumerated, there are, first, those which result simply from the *direct* action of an external object upon the nerves, and which are ordinarily termed *sensations* or *perceptions*. Secondly, there are impressions, which are derived from objects not directly, but indirectly, which result not from their actual presence, but from their past action, and from the effect they have left behind them upon the nervous system: these account for all the phenomena of *memory* and *conception*. Thirdly, there are impressions produced upon us by two or more objects or sensations, that have certain *relations* to each other; which impressions, from the fact of their embodying relations, we usually term *judgments* of the mind. And, lastly, there are impressions which result from certain physical feelings of want or of danger, of pleasure to be gained or pain to be avoided, and which lead us instinctively to perform the peculiar actions by which such impulses may be satisfied. Hence result the emotions, desires, and passions, which play so large a part in the economy of human nature. In this way the phenomena of perception, of memory, of reason, of emotion, are all reduced to the one element of sensation; and sensation itself to the action of the nerves as stimulated by the various circumstances of the external world.

We shall not stop now to point out particularly, the deficiencies which the system advocated by M. de Tracy, notwithstanding all its ingenuity and consecutiveness, presents ; nor attempt to shew how he has passed over, or only half explained such phenomena as those of abstraction and generalization, the power of the will and the peculiarity of the moral emotions. Instead of this, we shall rather offer a brief critique upon the ideological philosophy in general, as it appears upon the pages of the four eminent men, whom we have above enumerated, and to whom its celebrity throughout Europe is almost entirely due. The materialism of Cabanis, however, we must remind our readers, does not attach to ideology as a system, and therefore is more properly left out in the objections we shall now advance. The lectures of Garat, the ethics of Volney, and the logical deductions of Destout de Tracy, will equally hold good, whatever theory we accept to account for the phenomena of sensation itself. The great problem, rather, which these philosophers attempt to work is, to adduce from sensation, as an ultimate fact, all the phenomena of our intellectual and moral life ; and therefore, leaving for the present the endeavours, which some of them have made to reduce sensation to physical processes, we shall simply point out, in what respects they appear to us as a whole, to come short of any satisfactory solution

of the point, upon which they have expended so much argument and ability.

1. We maintain that the French ideology does not explain the facts of the human *understanding*. The distinction between the sense-perceptions, which arise involuntarily from the presence of an external object, and those active operations of the intellect which we carry on, when quite abstracted from the world without, is so obvious, that the two have never been confounded by any, except those who have had a preconceived theory to support. Memory, it is true, may be the memory of a sensation, but it is not the thing remembered, it is the power of recalling the thing, that has to be accounted for in our analysis of this faculty, and which, especially in the case of voluntary memory or recollection, is not at all explained by terming it a prolonged sensation. A prolonged sensation would be as passive throughout its whole duration as a sudden one; in recollection, on the other hand, the mind, from a purpose and impulse of its own, casts around for every spring of association, in order to call up the notion it requires. Judgment, again, may involve the simultaneous perception of two objects holding a certain relation to each other, but the perception of the objects themselves, and the estimating of their *relations* are two processes altogether different. I may perceive two things to-day without passing

any judgment upon their relations, and to-morrow I may have precisely the same perception of them, and append to it a mental comparison of the two, which, I am conscious, is an act, and sometimes a very complicated act, of my own understanding. Still less has the system we are considering been able to explain the more complex facts of generalization and abstraction, and the lofty creations of imagination. That an abstract idea, or a general term, or a glowing fancy-picture, can be produced by the same means, and by the same process as the ordinary sensations we experience of actual existences around us, is intelligible on no other principle than that of an ultra-idealism, according to which the so-termed real as well as unreal world, are both alike the creations of our own subjective self.

If we pass from the consideration of our faculties, to that of our more refined notions and intuitive ideas, here, again, the impossibility of accounting for the facts of the case upon the sensational principles we are opposing, meets us with equal decision. By what means, we ask, do we acquire the notions of time and space? If we suppose them, on the one hand, to be purely super-sensual ideas, then we must have some rational faculty to grasp them, inasmuch as sensation can only take cognizance of the various modifications of matter; or if, on the other hand, we suppose them, with Locke, to be abstractions from our sensations, yet still we must

have the power of abstracting them, which is a process altogether different from that of sensation itself, and one which it is impossible to reduce to the same elements. Whence, again, do we acquire our belief in the external world? If you say, from sensation,—then beware lest some sceptical philosopher, like Hume, plunge you in a sea of doubt respecting the reality of your senses-perceptions; a situation from which you are quite sure never to be extricated until you admit some principle of primary belief, or some original dictate of common sense prior to experience, from which you may gain a firm conviction, that the judgments you pass upon your sensations, respecting the material world, are valid. Further, we might inquire, from what source we draw our notions of power, of cause and effect, and some others of a similar nature. The reduction of these to the level of sense and experience, as Hume has shewn by a process of irrefragable logic, would in the end reduce creation to chance, religion to folly, and all mankind to atheism. We urge, therefore, on these grounds, (and many more might be enumerated,) the incapacity there is in the ideological philosophy, to account for the most palpable *facts* of the human understanding. Physiological experience itself tells us, that when certain stimuli urge any function into operation, they may give rise to an action generically different from those stimuli themselves; and by the same analogy we can conclude that the

mental excitement afforded by sensation may *possibly* give occasion to an intellectual action which, in its nature, altogether differs from it; while actual observation raises that possibility into a sure and certain fact.

2. The sensational system we are considering, does not account for the power of the will. There is in man a source of power—a secret spring of action, of which every one is conscious, and upon the consciousness of which every one acts, that we call *self*. In whatever light we view our nature, we find such an invisible energy, which cannot be accounted for upon any mechanical principles, playing an important part in the whole of our conscious existence.

If we study man physiologically, we must necessarily suppose a self before we can account for the phenomena of volition, which every hour presents. Cabanis himself, as we have before remarked, although in his former publication he had denied the existence of any thing beyond the nervous system, was obliged afterwards to admit some real and distinct *unity*, without which he perceived it to be quite impossible to explain the formation, the animation, and the preservation even of our material frame. Undoubtedly it might be urged, that the influence of a kind of animal instinct may account for many of the actions of man, as well as those of the brutes; but there is within ourselves, in addition to this, a higher power, which is superior to



sense, which subdues the very force of our instincts, which leads us perpetually to oppose and thwart our mere animal nature, and which, so far from being synonymous with instinct, is possessed in an infinite variety of intensity by men of the same bodily temperament and the same natural propensities.

If, again, we regard man as an *intelligent* being, here, also, we find the will operating in every faculty we exercise. The power of attention is nothing more nor less than the will exerting itself in modifying or prolonging the trains of thought—trains which are, in fact, never left to themselves uncontrolled, except in the hours of sleep, of reverie, or of mental disease. The same voluntary energy explains the rise of many of our fundamental ideas; it gives us all the notion we have of *power*, and consequently of causality; it lies at the foundation of human liberty, and is therefore the corner-stone of all moral responsibility. Of this great agent in our conscious existence, sensationalism, as held by the philosophers now under our consideration, can render no account. M. Destout de Tracy, indeed, affirms a liberty in man, which he terms the *power to act*, that is, the power of performing mechanical actions in obedience to the investigation of our nervous system; but this is by no means an adequate explanation of the facts of the case. Whence comes the *determination* to act upon certain fixed principles; whence the design that points

at the accomplishment of great objects; whence the energy which, in the pursuit of its purposes, overcomes the allurements of sense, breaks down all the barriers of our propensities, and despises weariness, suffering, and death itself, in comparison with the fulfilment of the moral laws, to which it owes eternal allegiance? Here are questions on which our author is silent, here facts of daily life, to which his whole system affords no solution.

3. We urge still further, that the French ideology does not account for the *emotions* of our nature. It commits an error in the outset by confounding our emotional feelings with those which are purely sensational. In sensation there is no intellectual action whatever; the mind is then existing merely in a receptive state; that is, it is simply feeling the impressions which, according to its constitution, things from without are capable of making upon it. Emotions, on the contrary, arise from some actual notion or conception, which has been formed by the exercise of the intellect, and which produces, according to its nature, corresponding feelings or impulses in the mind. Every one can easily distinguish the generic difference between the pleasurable feeling we derive from the taste of an apple, and that which we derive from the occurrence of some auspicious event; or between the painful feeling arising from a grating sound, and that arising from any circumstance, which inspires us with fear or dread. The

former class of feelings come from a material cause, and cease the instant their cause is removed; the latter arise from our *inward* perception of something relating to our own interests, from a purely intellectual idea, involving good or evil to ourselves. These fundamental distinctions are in the philosophy now before our attention altogether confounded, and the nervous system is made so excessively and incredibly sensitive, that it can shrink at an evil, or thrill at a prospect that may be realised a year, or perchance ten years hence.

Of all the emotions, however, those which come under the province of æsthetics are the least satisfactorily explained. On the ideological principles the emotion of beauty can be nothing more than a peculiar kind of sensation, produced by a peculiar kind of outward object. Now we do not at all deny, that the emotion in question does really arise with the presence of certain objects, termed beautiful; but if we analyze this emotion, we see that it contains an element in it quite different from that, which is here supposed. We judge of beauty, whether it be in poetry, or painting, or nature, according to some internal model of perfection—some beau-ideal which exists only in our own minds; and we term a thing beautiful or not, according to its greater or less resemblance to this standard. We never see a *perfect* model of beauty, either in art or nature, and never, therefore, perceive our beau-ideal embodied

in the beau-real ; on the contrary, however lovely any actual form may be, there is ever "*Aliquid immensum infinitumque*," some pure abstraction of perfection immeasurable and infinite in its nature, that still transcends it, and lies at the foundation of all the higher exercise of taste and fancy. Again, we say, then, that the ideological school altogether fails of a theory, upon which it is possible to explain all that is peculiar to the emotions of the sublime and the beautiful.

4. We urge, lastly, that the system we are opposing does not account for the facts of our moral and religious nature. The foundation of all morality, according to these philosophers, is utility in the very lowest sense of the term ; and the aim of all duty is the preservation of our physical enjoyment. These, we affirm, are the morals that are exactly fitted for an animal, which derives all its happiness from sense, and has no wish beyond the satisfaction of its bodily instincts. Viewing man in this light, the catechism of Volney is a very excellent summary of duty ; and, perhaps, might lead on his theory of man to as great an amount of mere animal pleasure, as could be expected in the present constitution of things. In opposition to this, however, we contend, that, to view human nature in this light, is to strip it of everything that is great or good ; to banish every true virtue from the world, as far as it is bound to spring from a virtuous source ; and to hasten on a result, which

would end in the breaking up of every tie that holds human society together.

There are in the human mind universally two great fundamental notions of right and wrong, which are as absolute in their nature, and as impossible of being obliterated, as any fundamental axioms of man's universal belief. The fact, that men of different nations, in different ages, and in different states of mental development, have held the most conflicting notions, as to what belongs to the category of right and what belongs to that of wrong, is no evidence whatever against the universality of those fundamental notions themselves; nay, it rather proves that they always exist, although the moral judgment may not be enlightened enough to apply them to all the practice of life. These notions, moreover, are accompanied with a moral *emotion*, which, while it gives us a profound admiration for what is purely disinterested, acts as an *imperative*, that becomes more and more powerful, in proportion to the greater development of the moral faculty; ever inciting us to the avoidance of evil, and the constant pursuit of good. The whole phenomena of our disinterested feelings; the admiration and enthusiasm we necessarily feel in the contemplation of any lofty examples of them, an enthusiasm which rises higher just in proportion, not to the *utility*, but to the *sacrifice* which accompanies their exercise; the entire absorption which such instances manifest in the rectitude of

the action, to the utter neglect of the suffering which may accrue, all point us to a class of moral sentiments to which the notion of our physical preservation has not the very slightest resemblance.

The ultimate aim, however, of these lofty and disinterested moral feelings, is fully developed only in our *religious* nature, pointing us, as it does, to a class of duties, altogether beyond the sphere of our present life, and to a destiny extending itself into the immeasurable futurity. The ideological philosophy, in the hands of Volney, was professedly an Atheistical one. Instead of attempting to account for the universality of the religious emotions, it derided them; and when it found the arguments by which their validity were sustained to be unanswerable, it deemed it convenient to enstamp all religious actions and feelings as those, which were only fit for dupes, or panderers to the profit of a knavish priesthood. To answer such arguments as these, we have neither space nor inclination, as it would be reasoning against a private hostility to religion, rather than a philosophical objection. Whatever system of religion he might adopt, unquestionably the true philosopher, who would give an account of all the elements of human nature, must not leave out, or dismiss with an incredulous smile, those deep sentiments and impulses of a spiritual kind, which have played so immense a part in the history of the world, which have given

to humanity its greatest force in every vast achievement, and lent it, as we think, its greatest glory.

The most purely abstract idea, perhaps, which we can take of man is, that he is a *force* or a *power* sent into the universe to act its part on the stage of being. The sensationalist views him as a mechanical force, created by chance, seeking simply the preservation of its organism, and accomplishing the destiny of a nature, which, strange to say, never had an intelligent designer. A more enlarged philosophy views him as an intellectual and a moral force, formed by the Being who is the centre and source of all intelligence, and all goodness, and endowed for the present with an organization adapted to the material world around him. The great aim of his being, in this view of it, is to develop more and more the intellectual and moral energy of which his real and essential nature consists; to defend the body indeed, as the organ of its present manifestation, but as it dies away, to prepare for a higher manifestation of intelligence and virtue, to which his religious aspirations had been ever tending, and where his highest desires will be ultimately fulfilled.

Before we take our leave, however, of the ideological philosophy, we must mention a far more recent effort, which has been made, both to advocate its principles, and to furnish them with additional proofs and illustrations. I refer to the

works Dr. Broussais published about the year 1828, one of which is entitled, "*Traité de Physiologie appliquée à la Pathologie*," and another, "*De l'Irritation et de la Folie, ouvrage, dans lequel les Rapports du Physique et du Moral sont établis sur les Bases de la Médecine Physiologique*." These works are by no means the productions of a philosopher, but rather of a physician, who, having devoted his life entirely to the observation of pathological and physiological phenomena, discovers in them, as he imagines, the theory of all the mental and moral manifestations of which man is the subject. In this view his aim coincides with that of Cabanis, although his ability for carrying it out was not by any means so great; and, in addition to this, the style of invective in which he sometimes indulges against the spiritualists, gives to his writings a very unphilosophical aspect. To enter into the various physiological theories he propounds; into his attempts to determine the seat of the different mental or moral powers; into his disquisitions upon irritation and the physical causes of madness, would require the knowledge peculiar to those of his own profession. This is, however, the less necessary, because whatever theory may be advocated to account for such phenomena, upon physical principles, it does not by any means set us at rest upon the higher psychological questions, to which intellectual philosophy gives its chief



attention. We have shown already, in the case of phrenology, that no analysis of our intellectual or active powers, and no valid explanation of our fundamental ideas, can, in the very nature of things, flow from the method of investigation it adopts, inasmuch as our mental phenomena must have been already duly considered, before any relation could be observed between them and the different portions of the brain. In like manner, whatever system, different from phrenology, be employed to account for the facts of consciousness upon physical principles, still there is the same necessity for metaphysical research, before anything can be distinctly known of those mental processes which we have to explain. With regard to theories of irritations or of vibrations, or of any similar movements by which materialism is supposed to be rendered feasible or intelligible, we have seen, in our general discussion of the materialist question, that such systems at best can be but mere hypotheses ; that even as hypotheses they do not account for the central force by which the vital and intellectual organs are continually put into exercise ; that they in every case confound the organ itself with the real exciting cause of the various functions ; and, lastly, that they totally fail in explaining the unity and simplicity of the mind, as witnessed by the daily evidence of our consciousness.

With Broussais we may consider, that the efforts

of ideology cease. Many, it is true, may still hold the principles it has supported ; but none, that we are aware of, are now to be found, who are able or ready to maintain them on broad metaphysical grounds.

The most complete and able attempts which France has made during the present century to uphold sensational principles, are, without doubt, to be found in this ideological school, which we have just been reviewing. At the same time there have been some few other manifestations of a completely different character and complexion, which, as belonging to the sensational philosophy of the nineteenth century, it would be wrong to pass by unnoticed. We must not forget, for instance, that the originator of the phrenological system, Dr. Gall, was a Frenchman ; that his researches were first published in the French language, and that whatever honour may be due to the school at large, at the head of which he stands, it must be mainly attributed to the industry and intelligence with which he pursued the subject in all its different bearings. Gall died in the year 1828, leaving behind him the reputation of being an earnest and sincere searcher after truth ; and though decried by many, as being grossly materialistic in his views, yet it is by no means evident that he really intended to advocate materialism, while it is quite certain that he strongly repelled

the charges of fatalism and immorality, which were attributed to his opinions.

Another erratic genius who shone with some brilliancy for a time in the hemisphere of French philosophy, appeared in the person of Azais. His object was not merely to discuss the phenomena of mind, but rather to embrace the whole universe in the grasp of his philosophical system. The Lectures he delivered about the year 1809, abounding at once with ease and elegance, gave great popularity to his opinions, which were soon further developed and discussed in three different works, entitled respectively, "Cours de Philosophie Generale," "Précis du Systeme Universel," and "l'Explication Universel." To give an adequate description of the theories contained in these voluminous works, would be a task by no means brief, and far from easy; but we refer the curious reader to an elaborate article in the "Journal des Debats" of the 5th of November, 1824, a translation from which will be found in a Note at the end of this volume.\*

The only name, which we have now further to adduce as belonging to the school of French sensationalism, is that of M. Comte, whose brilliant scientific genius has raised him to the very highest rank of modern authors, and given him a reputa-

\* *Vide* Note E in the Appendix.

tion not confined to France, but as extensive as the cultivation of philosophy itself. M. Comte originally was an offspring of the school of Saint Simon, and in some respects has ever retained an affinity with the doctrines of that remarkable sect; yet his profound researches in science, and his independence of mind as a thinker, have given him a position far beyond that of a mere partisan to any system of philosophy whatever. Up to the year 1816, he was a teacher in the Polytechnic School at Paris: on relinquishing his duties there, he devoted ten years of his life to the preparation of a course of lectures on *Positive Philosophy*: these he delivered in 1829, before an audience at Paris, comprehending many of the most eminent philosophers of the country, and has since published.

To explain the term positive philosophy, we must notice the fundamental principle upon which his whole system is founded. Having premised, that the object of philosophy is to explain the whole development of the human intellect in all its various spheres and modifications, he goes on to deduce from historical facts, as well as arguments derived from other sources, the great law by which that development has regularly progressed. This law consists in the fact, that the human intellect in the case of all individual nations, as well as of humanity at large, passes through three distinct stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive; each separate stage having its own peculiar

conceptions under which all phenomena and all branches of knowledge are regarded. In the first, or theological age, that of faith, men regard all the operations of nature as the direct product of supernatural power. In the metaphysical age, or that of hypothesis, having got beyond the reach of superstition, they regard the powers of nature not as the interventions of Deity, but as real entities or abstract forces, which of themselves originate all the phenomena of natural existence. Lastly, in the positive age, or that of science, the human intellect ceases to inquire after the origin and secret causes of things, it simply observes their facts and their laws, and having gained a positive idea of all these, rests content, without imagining the existence either of supernatural powers or of natural forces. In each stage of the progress the intellect strives after unity:—in the theological it attains it in monotheism; in the metaphysical, in the abstract idea of nature; in the positive it will attain unity when it has reduced all phenomena, by one prodigious generalization, to the modifications of a single fact, perhaps, that of gravitation.

With regard to the present state of society, M. Comte thinks, that the age of faith is already past, and that the age of hypothesis is now giving way to that of science. Astronomy, physics, chemistry, he considers have already become free from theory, and are reduced to positive terms: physiology has not yet arrived at that perfection, but is hastening

forward to it; and, lastly, social physics, comprehending the structure of human society, and the laws of human development, has yet to be placed on a truly scientific basis, and has yet to assume a positive character.

Such is the general outline of M. Compté's theory, which we at once perceive to be an enormous system of materialism, grounded upon great research, and supported by all the aids which physical science with its latest improvements can present. All philosophy, according to it, rests upon the outward observation of *facts*. In physics we observe the fact of the material world, in physiology the phenomena of life, and in social physics the historical facts of man's intellectual development. The great object of philosophy is to classify and arrange these materials, to discover the laws of their progress, and to reduce those laws to the highest possible generalization, rejecting all notion of *causes* as useless and vain. The idea of *power*, according to this philosophy, is but the lingering relics of the age of hypothesis; that of mind or spirit but a continuous attempt to personify the law of man's intellectual being, while that of God is altogether exploded, being, when viewed theologically, but the fruitless attempt of the human mind to account for the existence of the universe; when viewed philosophically, but the highest abstraction of causality, the "*causa causarum*," which in like manner has to give way under this age of

positive science to the simple idea of a general law, discoverable by the investigation of the visible facts to which it gives rise.

With all the admiration we cannot but have for our author's brilliant scientific genius, we cannot but deplore the illusions which such minds, charmed with a theory and absorbed in the investigation of the visible alone, gradually practise upon themselves. He admits that the stability of the solar system is absolutely necessary to the preservation of all animal existence; but, instead of seeing any design in this beautiful adaptation of things by an intelligent mind, he attempts to shew that such stability is but the natural result of the mechanical laws, by which the heavenly bodies perform their movements: and this is his substitute for a God! But here just as much is left to account for as before; nay, go back as we may, resolving phenomena after phenomena into their simple laws, there is just the same necessity as ever for us to assume the existence of a great First Cause, unless we choose to subvert all the indestructible notions, upon which we are obliged to act in all the practical affairs of life. Every action of the body, every effort of the mind, every volition of whatever kind, reveals to our consciousness the notion of a spiritual power, from which the source of our own action proceeds. Starting from this inward revelation, the reason of mankind cannot gaze upon the phenomena of the universe, without assigning a

spiritual power of infinite grandeur as the "primum mobile" of the whole. As well can we deny *self*, the cause of our own actions, as deny God, the cause of the *kosmos*, the universe of order, around us. This first step, that of the real existence of a God, being once extorted, the key-stone to a system of mechanical materialism, such as that contained in the "Course of Positive Philosophy," is taken away; its massive structure crumbles piecemeal before the force of spiritual truth, and with it the immortal hopes and aspirations of our nature return to smile upon the path of human life.

We only quote, in conclusion, the beautiful language of a reviewer well able to appreciate the merits as well as the errors of the positive philosophy:—"Had the opinions we have been combating been maintained by those rash speculators, who are permitted at distant intervals to disturb the tranquillity of the religious world, we should not have allowed them to interfere with ours. But when a work of profound science, marked with great acuteness of reasoning, and conspicuous for the highest attributes of intellectual power—when such a work records the dread sentiment, that the universe displays no proofs of an all-directing mind, and records it too as the deduction of unbiassed reason, the appalling note falls upon the ear as like the sounds of desolation and death. The life blood of the affections stands frozen in its strongest and most genial current, and reason and feeling but

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resume their ascendancy, when they have pictured the consequences of so frightful a delusion. If man is thus an orphan at his birth and an outcast in his destiny, if knowledge is to be his punishment and not his pride, if all his intellectual achievements are to perish with him in the dust, if the brief tenure of his being is to be renounced amid the wreck of vain desires, of blighted hopes, and of bleeding affections, then in reality, as well as in metaphor, is life a dream." \*

\* The above remarks apply to the spirit of Compté's philosophy *as a whole*. No candid mind can refuse to acknowledge the great merit there is in many of his separate researches, both in physical science and in sociology.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

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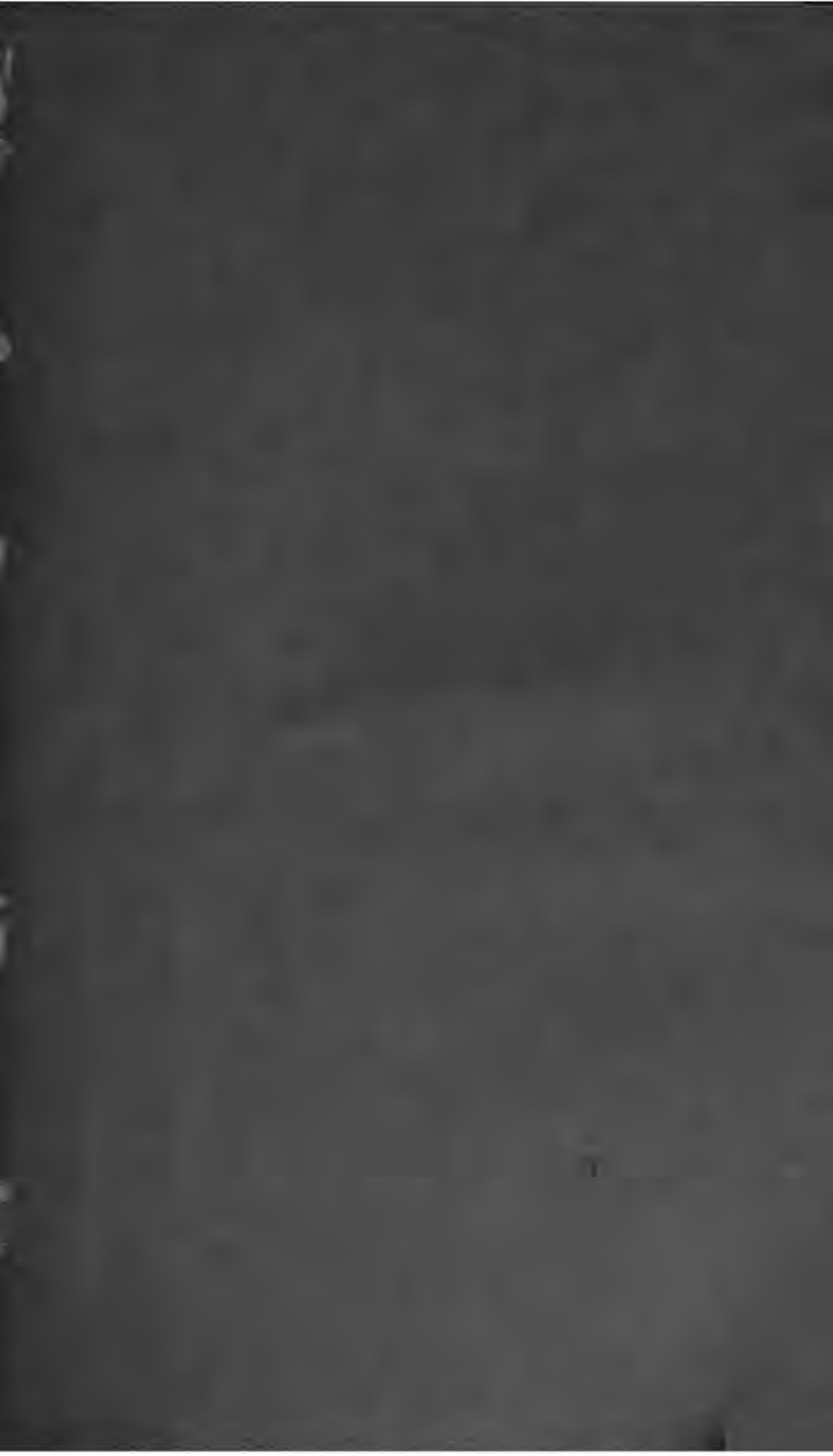
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